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14
The Kuranui Caledonian Mine. Thames N. Z.



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Family history - Preserving our past for the future



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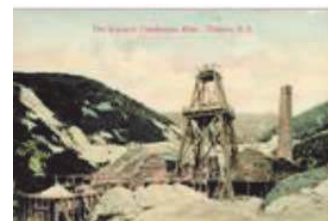
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Caledonian Gold Mine at Kuranui. Photograph taken circa 1880s. Photographer unidentified.
[Alexander Turnbull Library](#)



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Being a member, you get to be part of a community of amazing people with access to a wealth of information that members have put together for nearly 60 years. You can contribute to that information, either by writing articles about your own research, or helping with projects such as indexing school records in your area of interest. You will get direct help with your own research from other members or by joining one of our online or in-person courses. Or you can help other members with their challenges. It is all about sharing your passion and knowledge with people who get it, and as a bonus, making new friends!

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Subscriptions are for 12 months from the first day of the month in which payment is received.



This issue's theme:
Miners and Mining

Upcoming themes

December 2026
Wellington region

March 2027
Local finds

June 2027
Schools and Schooling

September 2027
Breaking down brick walls

Criteria

1. Relevance: related to people and their society; genealogy, family history, whakapapa, research, documentary sources, application, biography, genealogical technology etc.
2. Length: Feature articles 1800 to 2700 words (2–3 pages) plus images, short articles 500–900 words plus images.

Editing

The Editorial Team reserves the right to edit articles to meet standards and for readability, but if substantial changes are required the Editor will consult with the author.

Members' area

Members may submit queries on Contact Sought, Information Wanted, Information Offered, Trader and Reunion notices. Please do not abbreviate your enquiry. The first instance of any surname should be in capitals. There is no limit the number of entries you may submit, but your full name, email and membership number must be included with each entry.

Advertising

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Style Guide

You must refer to our Style Guide before submitting an article. This is available on our website:

[genealogy.org.nz/NZG-Editors-Notes/11168/](http://www.genealogy.org.nz/NZG-Editors-Notes/11168/)

Submission of copy

Submissions can be made in electronic format emailed to editor@genealogy.org.nz. Include your name, contact details and membership number.

Copy deadlines

Regular contributions, advertisements and feature articles submitted for consideration must be received by the Editor by the following dates:

Issue	Last date for consideration
March	17 January
June	17 April
September	17 July
December	17 October

BOARD REPORT



Family History Month has been busy all around the country. We hope you found a chance to meet new friends, find new sources of information and perhaps even break down a brick wall or two. Thank you to the many volunteers and branches who made these events happen.

At our AGM in June, we welcomed Dr Greta Gordon back to the board after a short break and welcomed two new directors: Kaye-Maree Dunn and Lea Cowley. We are sure all three will bring enthusiasm and varied skills to the board.

Also at the AGM, we were privileged to award two Life Memberships. Firstly, to Barbara Wyley #10677 for her service to the Far North Branch, the Scottish Interest Group, and for her service on NZSG Council and multiple other services to the Society and to genealogy over more than 30 years.

Our second Life Membership was awarded to Sarah Hewitt #25499 for her amazing contribution as Chair of the board for the past five years and for ensuring that our Society survives to this day.

Following the AGM, Melanie Middleton was elected as Chair with Simon Young as Vice-Chair. Bryce Johnson was elected as the third member of the executive. At our annual in-person board meeting in July, we had wide-ranging discussions about all areas of the Society. We started work

on implementation of the Strategic Plan and will keep our members up-to-date as work continues.

Coming up, we are looking forward to the Auckland Family History Expo in October. This will be a fantastic event with a new venue at King's College, in Otahuhu, Auckland. Make sure you check out the dedicated page on our website to see all the latest news. Bookings are online and filling up fast, so please register now to ensure you secure your place.

Next year is going to be a huge year for NZSG. In February we are hosting the AFFHO Congress in Wellington, which will be an amazing event for genealogists from New Zealand, Australia and around the world. Bookings are now available online.

NZSG will celebrate 60 years as a society in 2027. This is a great opportunity for all our members and branches to celebrate the beginnings of NZSG and the changes that have happened over the past 60 years. It is also a chance for us to celebrate the anniversary of the Family History Centre. If you have any ideas for our celebrations, please get in touch.

We welcome any ideas or thoughts from our members.

Melanie Middleton
NZSG Chairperson

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Margaret Pool (1946–2026)

The Hibiscus Coast Branch committee sadly announce the passing of Margaret POOL née MACKIE on 12 July 2026 in North Shore Hospital after a fall. She was in her 80th year.

Margaret Lucy Mackie was born in Christchurch, South Island, New Zealand, on 27 November 1946. She moved to Clydevale in Otago at the age of four and attended Clutha Valley School and South Otago High School, before moving on to Dunedin Teachers Training College, where she trained as a Home Science Teacher.

She was posted (under Bond) to teach at Milton, then Palmerston North, and Marton where, in 1970, she met Peter Pool who she married, and with whom she had two children. They moved to Auckland in 1984 where Margaret became involved with genealogy and the researching of their respective families, in the course of which they discovered that Peter also had MACMILLAN ancestors. Margaret's research took her to the United Kingdom several times, where she attended the 1991 Clan MacMillan Gathering in Scotland, and witnessed the opening of the Clan Centre at Finlaystone. Inspired by the experience, she returned to New Zealand and founded the Clan MacMillan Society of New Zealand in 1992.

Margaret served as the Clan MacMillan Society of New Zealand's first President, and was then for many years its Secretary, Committee Member, Clan Genealogist, and Patron; eventually being awarded Life Membership of the Society in recognition of her many contributions. She also became the first New Zealand Trustee of the Clan MacMillan Centre and Clan MacMillan International.

Margaret was a long-serving member of the Hibiscus Coast Branch, which she first joined when it was a very small interest group meeting in a member's home in the early 1980s.

In March 1987 Margaret was one of 20 people who turned up at Orewa College for a genealogy course run by a well-known genealogist at that time, Verna MOSSONG, and she always said that this was the beginning of her long genealogy journey.

By 1989 Hibiscus Coast numbers had grown, and so they became a member of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, and at the first committee meeting Margaret was elected as their secretary.

In 1991 Margaret taught a beginners' course at Orewa College, and the response was so good that a second one was offered, which saw the Hibiscus Coast Branch numbers grow. *The Coaster*, April 1991, in its report said: 'Margaret has the gift to make dry-as-dust topics interesting and absorbing'.

Myra FREW started doing local indexing projects, and Margaret was there as part of the team. Their first project was to index the Wainui Pioneer Village resources, and this was followed by the local cemeteries and then, in 2000, the local school's records.

For many years she was a committee member of the Scottish Interest Group. Margaret and Myra Frew, with their extensive knowledge in this area, soon became the HBC members to go to for help with Scottish research.

As NZSG member 7830, Margaret drove from Whangaparaoa to Panmure as a volunteer in the FRC Library to assist others.

Margaret served in many ways over her 37 years and was made a Life Member of the Hibiscus Coast Branch. She was truly a Life Member as she attended the June monthly meeting and was also there bright and early, along with Peter, for her last Research Day on 23 June. She will be sadly missed.

Wendy Inskeep, Convenor NZSG Hibiscus Coast Branch
E: wendyinskeep@hotmail.com



Margaret Pool in 2025



Memories of Moira Neal (1936–2026)

I came to know Moira Neal when she called a meeting to form a Scottish Interest Group in 1990 for people interested in studying their Scottish family history. I later became secretary of that group and worked closely with Moira, who was convenor. Moira put so much effort into forming the group and creating a library to assist people with their Scottish research. Research days were originally held at the Pitt Street Auckland Methodist Church then, after NZSG moved to their present premises and after Moira moved to Hamilton, SIG research days and their research library and material were transferred to Panmure. Moira's knowledge of Scottish customs, culture, language, places and history was of immense value, and Moira was able to help many genealogists in so many ways with her advice and experience. Subgroups were later formed in Northland, Greymouth, Nelson, Hamilton and Wellington. Her love of family history and helping others research meant so much to so many people. Thank you, Moira, for your love and care for the Scottish Interest Group over so many years.

Lois Fawcett

In April 2000, Antonia Jones, with the encouragement and support of Geraldene O'Reilly, convened a public meeting to establish the Waikato Subgroup of the Scottish Interest Group (SIGW). It was the first regional group to be formed under the 'Tartan Umbrella' of the Auckland-based Scottish Interest Group whose convenor was Moira Neal.

Moira and her committee were instrumental in helping the fledgling group find its feet. They provided a generous donation towards the establishment of the group, together with a collection of books, microfiche and a complete set of *Kiwi Kith and Kin*, the group's magazine. In one of many practical ways in which Moira encouraged the growth of Scottish family history throughout New Zealand, she encouraged similar groups to form. These became the 'Tartan Umbrella' in which she took great pride. At its height, the 'Umbrella' extended from north of Auckland to as far south as Nelson. From her home in Auckland, she was also a regular contributor to *Kiwi Kith and Kin*. Her

articles ranged from Scottish history and family history research tips to the pronunciation of Scottish place names, and she included stories by members from the 'Tartan Umbrella' groups.

As the driving force behind the network of Scottish genealogy groups in New Zealand, Moira combined enthusiasm, generosity and vision with a willingness to support others. Through her leadership and encouragement, she fostered a thriving community of Scottish researchers. Her legacy lives on in the groups she inspired and the family historians she encouraged along the way.

Antonia Jones

As a new member of the Scottish Interest Group in the mid-1990s, I offered to assist with members and interests lists, but this soon evolved to much more, as I am sure it did for the numerous people in and outside the committee.

Moira was the enthusiasm behind the Scottish Interest Group, always looking for how the group could do more. Moira did just that, advocating to purchase research material, encouraging the formation of branches, having a Scottish branch table at community events and starting projects on obituaries, etc.

It was always a busy but enjoyable time on the committee as you never knew what was next on Moira's list of ideas.

Elwyn Bachop



Moira Neal

Theme for December 2026 Issue — The Wellington Region

Our theme for the December 2026 issue of *The New Zealand Genealogist* is 'The Wellington Region'.

Do you have a connection to Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington? Named by the Māori explorer Whatonga, it has been occupied since the tenth century. More recently, in 1865, it became the capital of Aotearoa New Zealand. Do you have a family member who immigrated to Wellington? Did they find success or tragedy?

Did they use Wellington as a launching pad for the Hutt Valley, Kapiti Coast or Wairarapa. Do you have a story to tell?

Make sure to look at the tips on submissions on our website [genealogy.org.nz/NZG-Editors-Notes/11168/](https://www.genealogy.org.nz/NZG-Editors-Notes/11168/) before submitting your article.

Send your submissions to editor@genealogy.org.nz by 17 October 2026.



Three West Coast gold mining ancestors

Margaret Riordan

During my childhood, we had several holidays at an aunty's remote farm at Bell Hill on the West Coast. A gold pan hung in the shearing shed, and we children used it for 'expeditions' up the nearby creek. We did not know it at the time, but we were following the ways of our ancestors. Unfortunately, my more experienced cousin quickly declared that anything that slightly shimmered in my pan was definitely only fool's gold.

My mother, Katherine Hilda LALOR, grew up in Kumara, the third child born to James Lalor Jnr and Rose PAYN.¹ She was related to three men who had journeyed to the West Coast for the gold rushes in the 1860s and 1870s, made their homes there, and never left. James Lalor Snr took up residence beside the coast at South Beach to raise his family, while Francis Payn and Giuseppe (Joseph) SCETRINI both set up their family homes inland in Kumara.

In the early 1990s, during an introductory genealogy course, our tutor suggested that we visit libraries for the regional history books they contained. Soon I discovered *New Zealand's Last Gold Rush*, a book by William HEINZ, which carried the story of the rush to the Kumara goldfield in 1876.² There I found myself reading about the 1878 find at Larrikins, a short distance from the main field. According to Heinz, there were conflicting stories about the Larrikins discovery, but he wrote that some of the young men of Kumara were in trouble with the Police, perhaps with

skylarking at night disturbing residents. As a result, 'Frank Payne, Sam Deans and Billy Williams went prospecting. East of the existing workings at Kumara they dug a shallow shaft and struck coarse gold'.

In other books were more references to the Larrikins. Mona TRACY described how a party of new chums from Timaru was sent up to a terrace where the established miners were certain there was not any gold, but 'the simple larrikins advanced against the terrace—and discovered the gold'.³ Tony NOLAN wrote about how 'three sporting young diggers known as the Larrikins' would send up a loud shout of 'Cooo-ee' when they washed up their sluice boxes, and the proprietor of the Theatre Royal Dance Hall would tell his girls, 'Get out your best dresses: the Larrikins are coming to town'.⁴

I couldn't yet be certain that this 'Frank PAYNE' of the Larrikins was my great-grandfather. However, I found an obituary at Alexander Turnbull Library for Mrs M HONEY, the youngest daughter of our Frank, which made it seem very likely that he was. The obituary said that her father was originally from the Jersey Islands, had first settled in Timaru, then later in Kumara, and was one of the group nicknamed the 'Timaru Larrikins'.⁵ Next, an aunty helped me contact a cousin, Maurice Payn of Nelson, who she knew had done much research into our family history, and he confirmed that indeed we had a Larrikin in the family.

Image above:

Frank Payn operating sluice. Payn & Evenden Claim, Dillsmantown. Hokitika Museum, no. 1395

Francis Davis Payn (1854–1929) was born in the parish of St Martin on the Island of Jersey in the Channel Islands, the fifth child born to Thomas Payn and Elizabeth MOURANT.⁶ In the 1871 census his father Thomas was described as a ship carpenter, while Francis D was described as a mariner.⁷ Francis and his cousin, Philip, left as assisted immigrants to Canterbury on the ship *Dilharree* in December 1873, with both listed as carpenters.⁸

Anyone who has visited the old gold mining areas on the edges of modern Kumara will have seen the large boulders piled high as tailings. In his book, Heinz outlined reasons why obtaining gold in Kumara was much more difficult than in some other areas. The gold was not found in the beds of fast-flowing streams, but instead shafts and tunnels had to be dug, and huge amounts of wooden props and stays were needed to make the tunnels safe on unstable land. Extensive wooden races were constructed to carry the water needed to work the giant nozzle that was used to sluice the gold-bearing gravels. Frank Payn, with his carpentry skills, was ideally placed to carry out this kind of work.

He may have started life on the goldfields as a Larrikin, but Frank soon settled into life as a respectable miner. In the index to miner's rights from Kumara, 1876–1881, his name appears first in 1878, then each year thereafter.⁹ In 1879 Francis Davis Payne made a request in the Warden's Court for a Protection Certificate for himself and four mates for their alluvial claim situated at Larrikins Terrace, Kumara.¹⁰ He was listed as Chair for a meeting of the Kumara Miners Association in 1896.¹¹ It was recorded in 1905 that the return for the Wheel of Fortune claim at Stafford in the last month was 103ozs, and that 'Mr Frank Payn is now managing the Wheel'.¹²

In 1886 Frank married Johanna Scettrini, the eldest daughter of fellow miner Joseph Scettrini, and they went on to have eleven children in Kumara.

Unlike Frank Payn, who came directly to New Zealand as an assisted immigrant, my other two gold mining ancestors first migrated to Victoria, Australia, before later crossing the Tasman.

James Lalor (c 1837–1916) was an Irishman from Co Kilkenny. Not much is known about his early life, but an article about him in *Free Lance* says that, 'He was in Bendigo when the Eureka riots took place in Ballarat', and

that Peter Lalor, who figured so prominently in that event, was a 'distant relation'.¹³

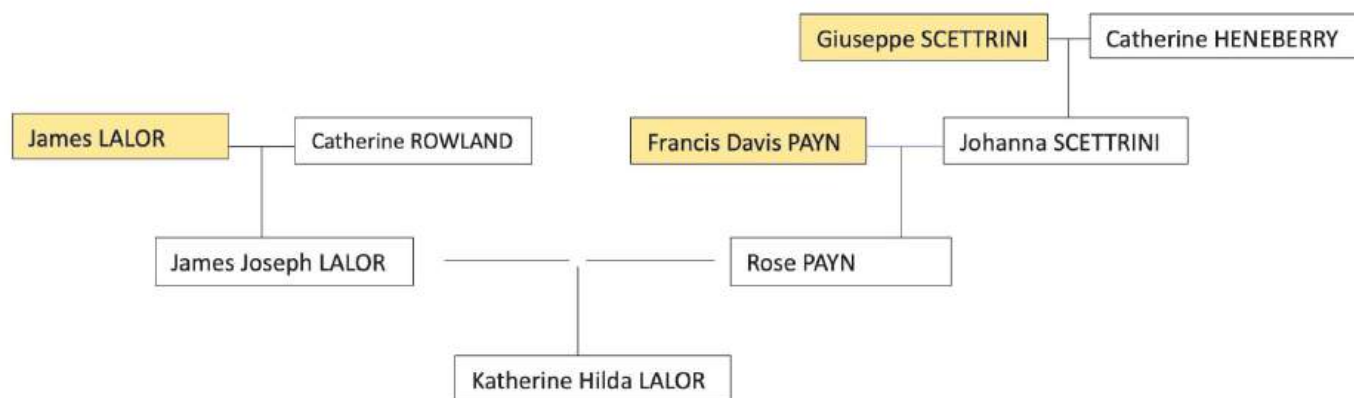
In his obituary it was noted that James had been manager of Mr Pettie's large butchery shop in Melbourne for several years, and from there sailed on the ship *Lightning* for New Zealand.^{14,15} It then stated that, 'He followed the early gold rushes at Addison's Flat and met with the success that most miners shared, and consequently retired from mining'. It is not certain exactly how long he stayed at Addison's Flat, but by January 1869 there was mail listed as unclaimed for 'Lalor, James' at the Addison's Flat Post Office.¹⁶

Despite his supposed 'retirement' from mining, there is plenty of evidence that James continued to be active as a gold miner for many years at South Beach near Greymouth. When he married Catherine ROWLAND in 1871 at the Roman Catholic Chapel in Greymouth, his calling was said to be that of a miner.¹⁷ And, as late as 1914 on the Westland supplementary roll, he is listed as James Lalor senior, South Beach, miner.¹⁸

Philip Ross MAY, in his book *The West Coast Gold Rushes*, writes about South Beach being a place that had very fine gold mixed in with the black sand of the beach.¹⁹ An advantage of mining on the beach was that it was 'free of the entangling bush and easily accessible', but May reported that traditional cradles and sluice boxes were inefficient and that 'so much gold was lost that the black-sand "tailings" often yielded as much as the original paydirt'. To address this, the 'diggers were forced to learn more of the methods of fine-gold saving, using mercury'.

In April 1883 James is listed as one of four men from South Beach applying for a lease of eight acres of land, for a period of 15 years, to be worked by ground sluicing. The company formed was to be called 'The Rising Sun Gold Mining Company'. One of the other company members was Robert DELANEY, who had been named as a witness at James Lalor's wedding 12 years earlier.²⁰

James Lalor can often be found in old newspaper items in situations that required public speaking. He served on various committees in Paroa, including the Road Board, the school committee, and the Licensing Committee. In May 1886 a public meeting was held about the leasing of South Beach lands. James Lalor proposed a motion, 'That a petition be presented to the Waste Lands Board, and a copy forwarded to the Honorable the Minister of Mines, showing



Katherine Hilda Lalor, Goldmining Ancestors—Tree Diagram

that by the sale or leasing of any land within the Paroa district that the miners would suffer severely, inasmuch as their very costly dams and water-races would become valueless, which should be viewed as a calamity to be averted'.²¹

Horses were also an important part of his life and his obituary recorded that, 'The deceased took a very keen interest in the trotting world, and will be remembered as the owner of Comrade and that well-known performer Woodland Dell'.²²

James held a special role later in life as a messenger in the House of Representatives in Wellington. This was a position he filled for 14 years, until he retired on government superannuation. In the *Free Lance* article, it described how he came up from Greymouth to don livery and serve on members when the House was in session, then returned to the Coast to 'resume his avocation as a gold miner'.²³ A search in Parliamentary Papers uncovers various amounts for his salary, the largest payment appearing to be in 1911–12, recorded as £74 18s 0d.²⁴

Finally, we turn now to Giuseppe (Joseph) Scettrini, the third of my gold mining forebears, and the only one to arrive in New Zealand already married.²⁵ Giuseppe was born in 1835 in the mountain village of Corippo, Ticino, Switzerland, the eldest son of Giovanni Scettrini and Maria Johanna SCILACCI.²⁶ Giuseppe's possible arrival in Melbourne is listed in a paper by Joseph GENTILLI, in March 1858 onboard the *Tornado*, which carried nine passengers from Corippo.²⁷ Gentilli described how, in the 1850s, a series of political events led to economic hardship in Ticino, and a large number of young men left in the hope of finding

improved conditions on the goldfields of California or Victoria.

Joseph was married at St Kilian's Catholic Church in Bendigo on 6 August 1864, to a young Irish woman named Catherine HENEBERRY who was born in County Tipperary.²⁸ The residence for both of them was Sailor's Gully, a gold mining area close to Bendigo, and their first two children, Johanna and John, were born in Victoria.²⁹ Nothing definite is known about how the young family came across the Tasman but they settled near Big Dam in Waimea during the Goldsborough rush, where their third child, Mary Ann, was born.³⁰

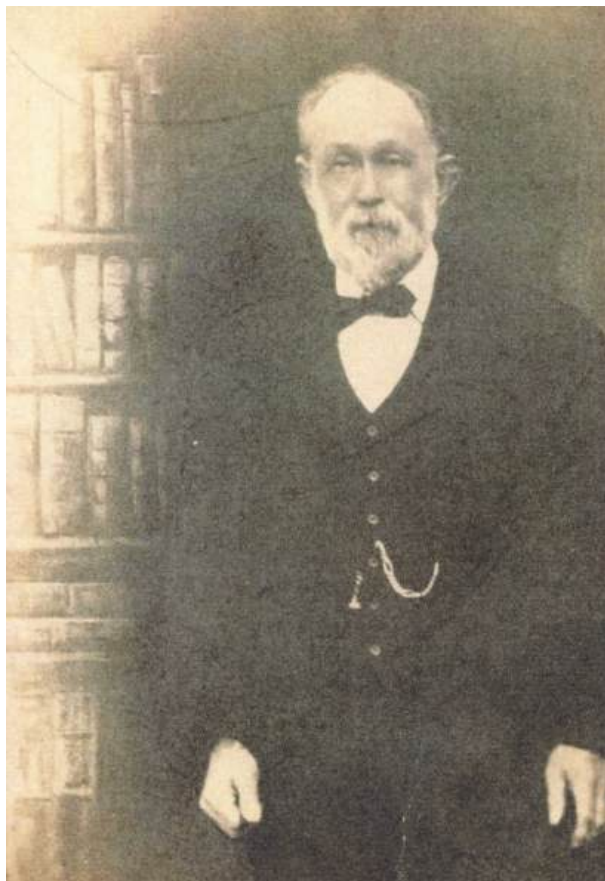
When Joseph applied for naturalisation in 1883, he said that he had been in the colony for 15 years, which puts his arrival at around 1867/1868.³¹ In his application, he wrote his birthplace clearly as 'Corippo, Canton of Ticino, Switzerland', which is a village in an Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. Despite naturalisation and 52 years of residence, he was placed on a list of aliens in 1915 during WWI, at 82 years of age.³² Unlike some others, though, he was allowed to remain living at his Kumara residence.

A range of documentary evidence can be found for Joseph's time on the goldfields. 'Scettrini Joseph' was listed as having a miner's right, numbered 9048, issued April 1878 in the Kumara Warden's Court.³³ His name was listed under that of Seddon R J. In May 1881 Joseph Seterina [sic] was granted a residence area near the boundary track, subject to a condition that he should 'give it up if at any time required for mining purposes, without any compensation for land or improvements'.³⁴

Joseph's most dramatic gold mining find was undoubtedly at Whisky Creek in 1890. This 'new rush' was raised in Parliament by Mr Seddon, who said that J Sceterini was the prospector and he had marked out a prospector's claim of six acres. 'He had driven a tunnel into the terrace from Whisky Creek for 40 feet.'³⁵ Seddon pointed out that there was great difficulty getting to this area 'owing to the want of a track', and he 'demanded that Government should come to the rescue and grant £200 for the purpose'. A geophysical survey was done of this area, named on a map as 'Citirini's Area, near Kumara, Westland'.³⁶ In the end, it turned out this new find was not as rich as first thought, and the rush died away.

Joseph's wife, Catherine, died in 1887, aged only 38, leaving Joseph a widower with 11 children aged from two to 21 years of age. He never remarried. He was 94 years old when he died in Kumara in 1928, being described as 'a very old and respected pioneer of the district', who had 'followed alluvial mining practically all his life, and was for some time employed on Government roads'.³⁷

Traces of our ancestors can still be found on the Coast. You can find a short walking track in Kumara known as Payn's Track.³⁸ And if you cycle along the modern West Coast Wilderness Trail, it takes you along beside South Beach, before later emerging into Kumara from the old tramway close to where the former Lalor home stands. It departs the village behind where the Scettrini home was on Boundary Road, before finally leaving the area and taking you past Larrikins.³⁹



James Lalor.

Lalor Family Collection, courtesy Maryanne Martin

My Uncle Jack Lalor used to go fossicking for gold, and in his later years he asked a jeweller in Hokitika to use gold flakes he had collected to make pendants for several nieces. I am lucky enough to have one of these, a lasting memorial to our gold mining ancestors.

Margaret Riordan
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Giuseppe (Joseph) Scettrini—birthday celebration, c 1923.
Family collection

A coal-mining family: the lives of James Stark and Rosina Steel in Southland, 1875–1900

Hugh Stark

Nineteenth-century migration to New Zealand is often told as a story of opportunity. Yet many migrants arrived with lives already shaped by hardship, labour and family responsibility. James STARK and his wife Rosina STEEL show how a young coal-mining family from Scotland carried both skill and domestic life across the world to Southland. Their story is one of continuity as much as change, with coal mining central to their lives before and after migration.

James Stark was born at Hamilton, Lanarkshire, a district closely associated with coal mining. From an early age he was employed in that industry. In 1861 he was recorded as a pony driver in a pit, work usually undertaken by boys but

demanding both strength and endurance. Such employment marked the beginning of a lifetime of work underground.¹

His early circumstances were modest. His father died when he was young, leaving his mother to support the family. Records show that the household moved frequently and lived in the crowded accommodation typical of mining communities. In one instance, several occupants shared a dwelling with only a single window. These conditions help explain the environment in which James came to adulthood.

Rosina Steel's early life followed a similar pattern within the same industrial setting. Before her marriage she undertook domestic and textile-related work, as was common for young women in Lanarkshire.

James and Rosina married on 16 July 1869 at Hamilton.² The marriage certificate records James as a coal miner, confirming that he had progressed to skilled work by that time. The couple began married life in Hamilton, living at Lamb Street and later at other nearby addresses. Their early household was formed within the same industrial environment in which both had been raised. In the 1871 census, James is again recorded as a coal miner.³

Three children were born to them in Scotland before they decided to emigrate. These years were shaped by family demands, alongside industrial work. Housing remained crowded and uncertain, and the loss of at least one infant child is suggested. Such experiences were not uncommon and help explain their later decision to leave.

Migration in the 1870s was shaped by both local hardship and opportunity abroad. The immigration scheme promoted by Julius VOGEL offered assisted passages for working families, and many from Britain took part. For the Stark family, the decision to emigrate can be understood in terms of economic pressure, overcrowded living conditions and the hope of greater stability.

Their migration is confirmed by the passenger list of the immigrant ship *Christian McAusland*.⁴ The entry records 'Stark, James, 25, Miner' with his wife Rosina and their children, listed as a family group.⁵ This shows that James emigrated as an experienced miner, bringing his occupation unchanged to the new colony. On this sailing were five other mining families.



James Stark and Rosina Steel, taken c 1905.

Thanks to Valerie Stark

Stark James	25	30	Alma	30
Mrs Rosina	25			
James	5			
Robt	3			
John				

Stark family entry showing James Stark listed as 'Miner', passenger list, *Christian McAusland*, voyage 29 May–30 August 1875. Archives New Zealand, Wellington, reference R4085428

The voyage to New Zealand was long and demanding. Conditions on immigrant ships were often crowded, and illness was common; 11 people died on the voyage. After arriving at Bluff in August 1875, passengers were placed in quarantine because of sickness during the journey. For a family with young children, it was a difficult introduction to their new country.

After release from quarantine, the family travelled inland to Mataura, where they settled. The transition from industrial Scotland to rural Southland was marked, but James's working life showed immediate continuity. Within a short time, he was engaged in lignite mining in the Mataura district, applying the skills he had acquired in Lanarkshire.

As the family settled in Mataura, their household expanded. Elizabeth, born in 1876, was their first child born in New Zealand. Over the following years, eight more children were born, and the Stark family became firmly established in the district. The growing household shows that migration had become permanent and that the family had made a successful transition from Scotland to Southland.

The schooling of the Stark children provides further evidence of the family's movements within Southland. In the 1880s they attended school at Mataura, confirming the family's early establishment there. By the mid-1890s they were enrolled at Gore Main School, reflecting the family's move to that township. A brief period in 1897 shows them attending schools at Mandeville and Croydon Siding before

returning to Gore, suggesting short-term movement consistent with James Stark's changing work locations.

The lives of the children also show how the family became part of the local community. The eldest son, James Stark, became known as a successful athlete, particularly at the Caledonian games held in Southland in the late nineteenth century. These events were important gatherings within Scottish migrant communities, and his participation reflects both the physical culture of the period and the continuation of Scottish traditions in the colony.

Life in Mataura was not without difficulty. The death of their son John in 1887, following illness, reflects the continuing presence of disease within small communities. Such losses remained a reality for families despite improved surroundings.

At the same time, James's position improved. In partnership with Thomas McNAIR, he became involved in coal extraction and supply, acquiring land and operating as a coal merchant.^{6,7} This marks an important stage in his life, showing both economic progress and the application of his mining experience in New Zealand. The partnership lasted more than six years.

The family home stood close to their place of work, and domestic life was closely linked to mining. Children grew up in that environment, and mining became central not only to livelihood but to family identity.

James's mining career was not confined to a single locality. Records indicate that he was associated with coal-mining activity in other parts of Southland, including Kaitangata. Although details of these periods are limited, such references reinforce the extent to which his working life remained tied to mining across the region. They also reflect the mobility of experienced miners, who moved between developing coalfields as opportunities arose.

By the late 1880s and early 1890s the family moved to Gore, a township developing alongside the coal industry. In 1894 James acquired property at 6 Duke Street, establishing a more permanent residence. This move reflects a degree of stability achieved after nearly two decades in New Zealand.

In Gore, James continued in coal mining and became the operator of a substantial lignite pit.⁸ Contemporary reports describe an enterprise producing significant quantities of coal each year and employing several men. By then his sons were also working with him, continuing the family association with mining. The progression from boy worker in Lanarkshire to coal proprietor in Southland is notable, but equally significant is that his occupation remained constant.

As the family matured, the children established their own households and occupations. Some remained connected with mining and related industries, while others entered farming, railway work or trades. This reflects both opportunity and the development of a large settler family. In the later 1890s James briefly entered hotel management at Otamita. This departure from mining was short-lived, and he soon returned to his established occupation.



James Stark, 1920, taken in Masterton with neighbour, Edith.

In their later years, family life changed as the household dispersed.⁹ Rosina spent periods living with different children, while James continued working for as long as his health allowed. Evidence suggests that they did not always reside together permanently, although they remained connected through family ties.

Rosina died in 1919 in Masterton. James died in 1921 in Christchurch after illness. His working life had extended over more than 60 years, almost entirely within coal mining.

The lives of James Stark and Rosina Steel demonstrate the continuity of both occupation and family life across migration. Coal mining remained the central thread linking their lives in Scotland and New Zealand, while their growing family anchored them within the developing communities of Southland. Their experience reflects that of many assisted immigrants: arrival with limited means, establishment through labour, and the gradual creation of a permanent place within New Zealand society.

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*Maitara in background with James Stark and Thomas McNair's coal mine highlighted.
Contemporary mine in foreground. Thanks to DC Muir*



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Samuel Draffin: a gold rush pioneer

Alec van Helsdingen

My 3x great-grandfather, Samuel DRAFFIN, was a gold miner for most of his adult life. He was born on 14 April 1839 in Girvan, Ayrshire, Scotland.¹ Girvan lies on the coast overlooking Ireland, where his father and maternal grandparents had all been born. His parents, like most of the town, worked in weaving. However, automation was reducing the demand for labour, and so in 1854 Samuel's father, John, led a group that petitioned the Australian colonies to be granted permission to immigrate.² The following year, John, his wife, Mary TAIT, and their four surviving children arrived in Hobart.³

The family did not live in Tasmania for long, for in 1860 Mary died in Creswick, Victoria.⁴ Samuel started gold mining in Victoria, according to a biographical account of him published decades later in the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*.⁵ He arrived at Port Chalmers in September 1861, sailing aboard the *John McVicar* from Melbourne.⁶ By his own account, he then went to British Columbia for the Cariboo gold rush. However, I have not found any contemporary documentation of this, or of his claim that before visiting America he was among the first at Gabriels Gully, where the Otago gold rush began. Samuel next appears in records when he married Bridget Mary DOWLING at Hokitika on 20 February 1866. At the time of his marriage, he was a miner at Hau Hau Creek, where he had been living for 10 months.⁷ Hau Hau Creek was part of the 'Blue Spur' goldfield where gold had first been found the previous year.

The couple did not stay in Hokitika for very long. By 1870 they lived in Brighton (now Tiromoana) further up the West Coast. Now scarcely inhabited, Brighton was then a thriving gold rush town. It was there that many of their eight children, seven sons and one daughter, were born. Remarkably, all survived to adulthood, and only one son

died unmarried. Samuel appears on electoral rolls as a miner in Brighton until 1881. He left for the Coromandel, but I cannot find him in any records until 1890. At that time, he was living in Kūaotunu, on the north-east of the peninsula. He lived there until around 1894. Apparently, he then went to Coolgardie in Western Australia, but soon returned.⁸

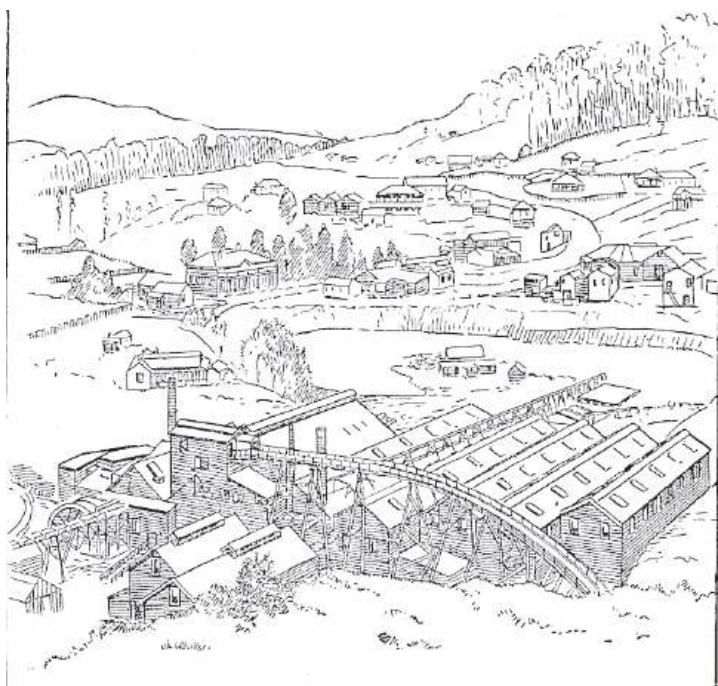
In 1895 he became manager of the Grace Darling mine at Waitekauri.⁹ Waitekauri lies to the north of Waikino in the Karangahake Gorge. By this time, the gold 'rushes' were over. The alluvial gold found in riverbeds was mostly taken, and miners turned to extracting gold from quartz ore. Mining was no longer carried out by individuals with pan and shovel, but by large companies with access to capital. In November 1897 Samuel reported that processing 50 tons of quartz had yielded a return of £3 4s per ton (about \$800 today).¹⁰ By February 1900 he was no longer manager.¹¹ In his absence, the Grace Darling Gold Mining Company fell into financial difficulty after a disappointing yield.¹² After failing to raise enough capital on the sharemarket, the company was liquidated in July 1900.¹³ Under new owners, the mine resumed operations and Samuel was reinstated as manager.¹¹ He still held the position in 1905.¹⁴

The years he spent at Waitekauri are the best documented of his life owing to frequent mentions in the local press. He was very active in sport administration, being involved with the Waitekauri Athletic Club, the Ohinemuri Rugby Union, the Waitekauri Jockey Club, the Waitekauri Racing Club and the Ohinemuri Cricket Association. He was active in local politics, being elected to the Waitekauri School Committee in 1897 and serving as councillor for the Ohinemuri County Council between 1900 and 1902.^{15,16,17} He had a myriad of other business interests, both in other gold mines and in other industries.

During the period between his two stints as manager of Grace Darling, he purchased the Hauraki Hotel in Waitekauri.¹⁸ He and Bridget ran this for the next six years. It was also the venue for the wedding of their only daughter, Catherine Mary, my 2x great-grandmother, in 1902.¹⁹ She married Ralph MONTGOMERY, who managed the nearby Owharoa Hotel. Ralph came from a similar background to his father, William Shore Montgomery, who had also been a miner in Thames and Huntly.

Samuel and Bridget left Waitekauri in 1906.²⁰ The farewell function for them was 'the largest gathering ever seen there for years'.²¹ Around the same time, Catherine and Ralph also left the area. Mirroring the departure of the family, gold mining in the Karangahake gorge declined over the following decades. Little remains of Waitekauri, save for the post office which now stands at the Paeroa maritime museum. The Hauraki Hotel was demolished in 1909.²²

Samuel spent the last years of his life in Ngaruawahia, running the Waipa Hotel and was still active in sport administration. Bridget died in 1912, and the following year Samuel gave up his liquor licence. Samuel Draffin died on



A sketch of Waitekauri in 1898

11 February 1914 at the age of 74.²³ He and Bridget are buried together at the old cemetery at Ngaruawahia.

Samuel lived a remarkable life, as a gold miner in at least four places in New Zealand as well as overseas. His career spanned a period of great technological change, from the early gold rushes to the more mechanised operations for mining quartz. Besides his career and his contributions to community life, his legacy also includes a large number of descendants.

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Family portrait of Samuel and Bridget Driffin with their children. Thanks to Terry Montgomery

Uncovering history with science

Mike Stone

While many of us try to uncover our ancestor's history using documented evidence, experts can use aspects of forensic science to uncover information about the lives from human remains. And the process is fascinating.

When bodies have been in the ground for a while, they often cannot be identified using soft tissues (e.g. fingerprints, blood) due to their extensive damage. But the bones survive and their structure and composition, as well as aspects of extracted DNA can give us some information.

Careful observation of bones can reveal some general characteristics of the unknown person—age, gender, height, build, trauma, disease.

The elements in bones come in different forms called isotopes, e.g. C-12, C-13, C-14. We take in isotopes with food and water and it ends up in our tissues. As certain isotopes are more abundant in some materials and places than others their presence can identify something about where that element came from. Also, different tissues can give us different information, e.g. teeth provide information on childhood (when they were being formed), bones provide more recent (remodelling every 10 years or so) and hair the most recent information.

The DNA in bone is difficult (and therefore expensive) to extract. Bone cells are embedded in a hard matrix. And the DNA degrades over time (from the effects of decomposition), so it may be in pieces and very small quantities. However, it can be done.

Nuclear DNA can be extracted from ancient samples in bone fragments, teeth, and sometimes other tissue. The short sections need special processing to build a DNA profile (as forensic scientists do).

Historical records can sometimes show possible identities for unknown remains (e.g. a missing person whose characteristics match). If living relatives can be located, a DNA sample taken from them can be compared with the DNA profile to confirm identity.

With old human remains, mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is often more useful. Mitochondrial DNA is more abundant in cells than nuclear DNA and can survive in situations where nuclear DNA becomes degraded. Mitochondrial DNA can also be found in hair without roots. Once sequenced, mtDNA tells us about where the matrilineal line originated.

And so, to the remains. In 1861 Gabriel Read found gold in inland Otago, starting a gold rush that attracted many from around the world in search of a fortune. The miners worked in the goldfields and were buried in the local cemeteries when they died.

Starting in 2016, communities near the Otago goldfields (Milton, Lawrence and Drybread) asked a team of scientists to identify the remains in unmarked graves from their cemeteries. The remains were exhumed for analysis and laid to rest again in 2023.

Māori were less common on the Otago fields. They traditionally placed no worth on gold—pounamu was their taonga—but once they realised its value, they would sell gold to the miners. Māori had their own urupā and are therefore not represented in this study.

Scientists analysed the remains. Isotopic analysis of teeth gave an idea of childhood diet, while hair gave information about the diet of the person's last few months. Mitochondrial DNA evidence provided detail about where the maternal line originated.

Acidic groundwater had degraded the bones, so only teeth and hair could be analysed and nuclear DNA was not recoverable. The mtDNA results showed most of the remains came from the United Kingdom or Europe, and a few from China (and teeth isotopes could often pinpoint the region). There were a couple of anomalies: one person buried in the Chinese cemetery came from Southeast Asia; one person's maternal line came from Europe but they were buried with Chinese artefacts.

This and other evidence showed:

- The Chinese had a better diet, with more meat. This was unexpected. However, being seen as outsiders, the Chinese lived in separate camps as a cohesive community, sharing food stores. They sometimes grew leafy greens, had a good supply of dried meats and also ate rabbits and birds.
- Most had mercury in their tissues, some to toxic levels. In compound form, this element was used to extract gold from dross but was also taken as medicine for many ailments.
- Many had rotten teeth—cavities, abscesses, ulcers.
- Some had lesions on their bones suggesting scurvy. This indicated they ate little fresh fruit and vegetables, which were scarce, having to be carted in from the coast.

Some of the remains were identified (e.g. from name tags or by matching injuries to historical records) but many remained anonymous. However, all gave an idea of life in the goldfield.

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The cost of the coal: Samuel Coulter and the Kaitangata disaster

Dennis Bush-King

Samuel COULTER, my 2x great-grandfather, was a Scottish miner whose journey to New Zealand in 1878 was typical of many migrants of this time. For Samuel, his wife Elizabeth, and their children, the promise of a new life in New Zealand was, however, cut short just one month after their arrival when Samuel died in the Kaitangata mine disaster of 1879.

Mining in the blood

Samuel Coulter was born in Scotland in 1829, the son of John and Jane Coulter. He married his first wife, Jane PATERSON, on 29 October 1847 in Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire. When the first of eight children was born, he was already a coal miner at the small Auchenheath underground mine, 1.5 miles east of where the family lived in Kirkmuhill. By 1861 census records place the family in Bankend, Lanarkshire, where Samuel worked as an ironstone miner.

Life in the mining rows was a struggle. Housing provided for miners at the time, stone-built blocks dating back to the 1830s, was described in 1910 as largely substandard. Many of these homes were damp, suffered from leaking roofs, and lacked basic ventilation, with sanitation limited to shared outdoor privies.¹

The nature of the work itself was physically tough and dangerous. Mining ironstone involved drilling into rock, using explosives to loosen the stone, and breaking it down with heavy sledgehammers. As resources near the surface were exhausted, miners drove tunnels or 'drifts' into the earth. To maximise efficiency, workers would remove the wooden props supporting the roof in exhausted sections, a hazardous process that often resulted in cave-ins. Miners worked in constant proximity to the dangers of rockfalls, blasting, and the heavy ore wagons that travelled through the narrow, dark tunnels.

Jane died on 22 May 1863 from complications after giving birth to their eighth child, John, who died four days after birth on 10 April 1863. So, Samuel was now a widower with six children aged 11, nine, seven, four, and two-year-old twins. As needs must, Samuel formed a relationship with Elizabeth DOUGLAS, who had two children, and they married on 8 April 1864. Together they moved between localities like Climpay, Strathaven, West Calger and Wilsontown. The common denominator was that they were all associated with mines—coal, ironstone or shale. The family grew with another six children, the last, Robert, being born 14 July 1876.

Miners' wages fluctuated reflecting the fortunes of the mine owners, the influence of unions, and general economic conditions. Many of the miners were paid 'truck wages', an arrangement where payment was made in the form of credit to buy food and clothing from local stores, invariably owned by the mining company.² This payment system meant miners continued to be poorly paid wage labourers.

The call of the Antipodes

The 1870s saw the introduction of the Vogel Scheme in New Zealand, a public works and immigration programme designed to transform the country. For many Scottish families, the prospect of free or subsidised passage offered a rare chance for a better life. Already, Samuel's eldest son, William, and his second and third daughters, Jane and Margaret, had emigrated in 1875, settling in Kaitangata, and William had established himself as a miner. Samuel would also have been aware that his first cousin by marriage, Hugh Paterson, emigrated to Dunedin in 1863 after his first wife Jane's death.

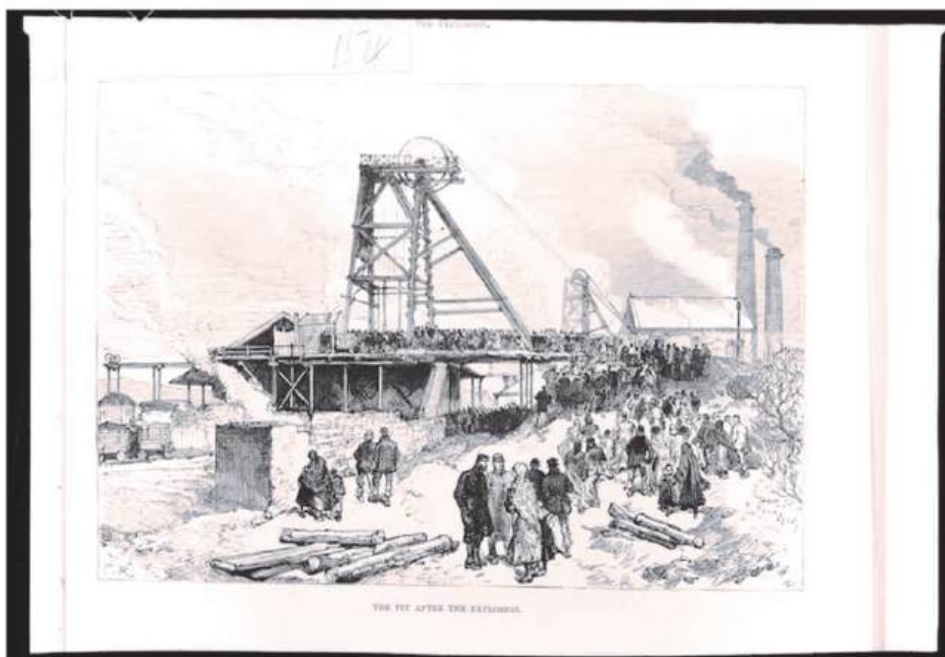
In late 1878 Samuel, Elizabeth and their remaining children, ranging in age from 17 to toddlers, along with eldest daughter Grace and her miner husband David

Kaitangata Coal Mine. The pit after the explosion.

Illustrated London News

Ref: [PUBL-0033-1879-001](#).

***Alexander Turnbull Library,
Wellington, New Zealand***



BUCHANAN and their three children, departed from Wilsontown for Greenock. They boarded the ship *Taranaki*, joining over 300 other passengers for the voyage. The journey to New Zealand was fraught with trials: passengers endured storms, rampant seasickness and an outbreak of diarrhoea that saw many children fall ill. The family suffered a personal tragedy on 9 January 1879, when their young grandson, William Buchanan, died of exhaustion and was buried at sea.

After 78 days at sea, the *Taranaki* reached Port Chalmers on 24 January 1879. The family moved quickly to Kaitangata where coal mining was the economic lifeblood of the town. By 13 February, Samuel and son-in-law David Buchanan had begun work at the Kaitangata Coal Mine, joining William and daughter Jane's husband, John FORRESTER, who was an engine driver.

The disaster at Kaitangata

The Kaitangata Coal Mining Company, established in 1872, was experiencing a period of intense growth by 1879. The company directors wanted to increase production from 75 tons to 200-300 tons per day. Was this a recipe for prioritising speed of delivery over safety?

Mining surveyor Edward TWINNING had recommended the creation of a second shaft as early as December 1878 to improve ventilation and safety, but this critical work remained unfinished by February 1879. Catastrophe struck at 8.30am on 21 February 1879, one and a half hours after the start of the shift. A massive explosion rocked the mine, instantly killing Edward DUNN at the entrance and destroying the ventilation system that kept the mine's air breathable. Smoke billowed from the pit, signalling a disaster of immense scale.

The recovery process was slow and agonising. Rescuers from neighbouring mines faced the lethal threat of 'after-damp'—poisonous gas that had filled the tunnels. By the time the search concluded, 34 men and boys had lost their lives. Samuel Coulter, described as 'an aged man' and yet he was only 50 years old, and David Buchanan were among the dead.³ Son William, fortuitously, was one of 13 workers not working at the time of the disaster, and John Forrester was not listed among the casualties but his brother-in-law, Andrew JARVIE, was another casualty.

The subsequent inquest exposed the chilling reality of the mine's management. Mine Manager William HODGE had no formal training in mine management, and the company had failed to provide adequate safety equipment. Despite Hodge knowing of the existence of fire damp as early as 1878, the miners were forced to work with naked candles because the requested safety lamps had not arrived. The jury's verdict was unambiguous—the disaster was caused by the negligence of William and his brother, Archibald Hodge.⁴

The after-effects and the cost

The town of Kaitangata was shattered. The loss of 34 men, left 24 widows and 88 fatherless children in a community with limited resources. Elizabeth Coulter, aged 41 and six months pregnant, suddenly faced the prospect of raising a large family alone in a town she had only recently arrived in. While a national relief fund was established to provide the widows with a small weekly stipend, the emotional toll would have been huge. The two eldest 17-year-old

daughters, Elizabeth (my great-grandmother) and twin sister Ellen, became women very quickly.

Samuel Coulter's story did not end with his death. His youngest son, also named Samuel, was born just six weeks after the explosion. Today, the Coulter family tree encompasses over 2100 known descendants—not bad for a man who lived in New Zealand for only a month, and testament to how a family that, despite arriving in a new land only to face the ultimate tragedy, managed to carve out a future from the ashes of the Kaitangata mine disaster.

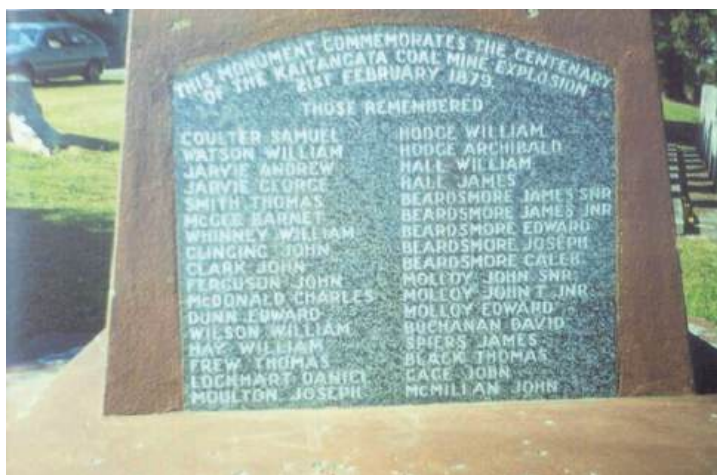
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*Kaitangata Mine Disaster Memorial,
Kaitangata, taken by the author, 2001*

Mining—The wider whanau—four vignettes

Bobbie Amyes

It is hard to think that amongst our ancestors of crofters, sailors, gardeners and tenant farmers, there would have been direct ancestors who toiled in the unsafe conditions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century mining, but my LOWRIE lead-mining ancestors were such. Other examples were the ROGERS of Cornwall, whose whole families would be involved in different aspects of mining the Cornish copper mines. The men toiled down dark mine shafts, while the bal maidens and children as young as eight sorted the rocks brought up from the depths. Then some, like the joint Rogers and ARGALL family, continued working in mines

after emigrating to New Zealand on the *Blenheim* in 1840. With no mining in New Plymouth, they applied their trade in Australia, the United States, and in other parts of New Zealand. Some within the wider family chased 'gold' in Australia and New Zealand. For mining to succeed, it needed folks who worked occupations that supported mining. Here are four vignettes.

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The Lowries—Lead Mining

From our oral family history, we knew William LOWRIE married Catherine CAMERON, and they were the parents of my 2x great-grandfather, John Lowrie, of whom two sons, James Lowrie and James Stewart Lowrie, were pioneer farmers in the Turakina Valley. Yet, it was via another son, Alexander Lowrie, that we know about Scottish mining conditions in the mid-1800s. The early oral history suggested a family link to mining in Winlothead, Ayrshire, but subsequent research showed their connection to Leadhills, near Wanlothead, Lanarkshire. Now, onto Alexander Lowrie's specific history.

To quote: 'In 1838, a number of miners from Strontian in Argyshire were taken on at Leadhills, the newcomers, Camerons, McPhersons, McCalls and Lowries.' The Leadhills mine had been rocked by a strike in 1836. J A BARRON had organised for the 1838 Strontian workers, probably thinking he was getting a docile workforce, because of their desperate need for work. It turned out not to be the case. Alexander and John Lowrie took Barron to the Lanark Sheriff Court in September 1839, claiming their partnership (usually an autonomous group of miners, here four) had not

been paid for a bargain (contracted work). After working on their set bargain, they were pulled off and ordered to work in 'the Stoup', a deep level mine where the air was so bad 'they couldn't bear it'. They refused to go. Barron then claimed they had deserted their work and all they had earned would be forfeited. Barron claimed that was the rule. The overseers, WEIR and RUSSELL, stated that the partners did not need to work 'the Stoup'. Claim and counterclaim were levelled. The Highlanders spoke Gaelic, the mine interests English; there was no written agreement, just a verbal contract. Barron was accused of saying he didn't care if their families starved. The case dragged on for four years, the Lowries eventually settling in February 1843 for £25 17s 4d, of which £10 went to their lawyer. A moral victory rather than a monetary gain.

The court case stands out for several reasons. Previously, problems involved serious mischief at Wanlockhead in 1833, followed by strikes as in 1836, but here a group of miners took their concerns through the courts. The Gaelic-speaking Highlanders proved not to be 'simple uncouth' northerners, but strong believers in their rights and perhaps a little impertinent and lacking 'due respect' in their view of the mine hierarchy. When asked, Alex Lowrie is said to have replied, 'Not only did he not know the date of the payday, he doubted that management knew'.

The infrequent payment of the men meant serious hardship for the Strontian miners' families left at home. Again, the miners organised themselves with 26 men signing a petition to be paid quarterly. This petition, November 1839, got agreement from Barron and 'This departure shall be made to the custom of the Establishment'. The Lowries and the other Highlanders went on to work at Carsphairn mines and when, in 1846, the mining situation improved in Strontian, most returned home.¹

When Alexander Lowrie moved back to Strontian, he is recorded in a more dramatic incident. Now married and living in Anaheilt, just south of the Strontian mines, his 1851 census



A snapshot from the 2008 Strontian Community Hall display of mining in the area

records give nothing of the happening, but the 'Schedule of Arrears Owing' states he owes £3 2s 6d, is married, has no family, was injured in mines last August and is unable to work at present. It then states he should be removed from his house and croft (no. 50) and relocated with his stepmother, Flora Cameron Lowrie (my 3x great-grandmother) and her family (of no. 51) to a different house and croft (no. 59).

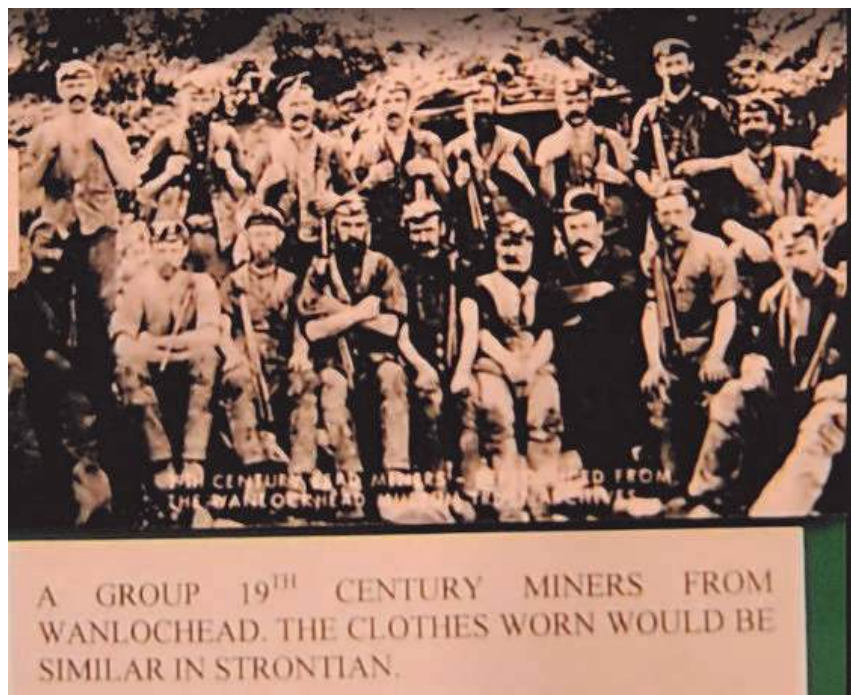
Though the RIDDELL household of Sir James Milles Riddell was facing its own hardships, which resulted in the sale of half the Ardhnamuchan Peninsula, the petty debts of one of their miners injured in a recent disaster up at the Strontian Mines, where another was killed through negligence, point out the discrepancy between the rich and poor.

Held at the Office of Procurator Fiscal Tobermory, the notes give a graphic insight into mining conditions in the mid-nineteenth century.² They were the handwritten statements made at the time of Duncan Cameron's death, which was caused by a rockfall in the Strontian lead mine in 1851.² While the statements do not dwell heavily on the poverty and starvation, it is pertinent to remember that it was at the height of the potato blight. Not only did Ireland suffer famine but so did Scotland and parts of Europe. Alexander's words, 'I had to go where I was sent or consent to starve', summed up the local miners' plight. Alexander McMASTER and Alexander McPHEE were on the first shift of the blasting party, Alexander Lowrie and Duncan Cameron on the following shift. The four of them had taken on the bargain (job) to blast on Bellsgrrove, Middle level, Strontian Mine. They were to make an opening four or five feet wide, then a shaft three fathoms. Above the area where the shaft was to go down hung a large stone eight to nine feet high and 12 feet broad. Though the four constantly complained about the danger of the large boulder, James FLOYD, the Mine Superintendent, was adamant it could not be moved yet. Alexander Lowrie even remained home rather than work in such a dangerous situation, but prospect of starvation

meant he returned. Daily, the two shift pairs checked the stone's safety, but each day of the blasting directly below meant it became less secure. Though worried and again checking the boulder, Lowrie and Cameron started their shift. Their first charge proceeded as normal. Returning to load the second charge was when the big stone fell, killing Duncan Cameron and damaging Alexander's hips and lower body. The rock had split, with a large part covering Lowrie, with the edge jamming and killing Cameron. Our knowledge of the event comes from detailed statements from all the participants. They were the handwritten records taken by William Robertson JP.

Alex Lowrie eventually recovered enough to return to mining, and neither his family nor Flora's family were forced to amalgamate and share a croft and house. When Alexander's brother, James Stewart Lowrie died in 1878, James's choice of lifestyle, i.e. the moving from Scottish mining to breaking in and establishing farmland in the rugged Turakina Valley, paid off monetarily. James Stewart left in his will £20 to his brother, the said Alexander, and another £20 to half-sister Sarah, both in Strontian. His farm of 153 acres was left to his Turakina grandnephews. James Lowrie, his younger stepbrother, my 2x great-grandfather, had also made a similar choice to forgo the miner's subsistence lifestyle. Arriving as settlers in 1856, he, his wife Henrietta and son Donald turned rugged steep hill country bush into a successful sheep farm. All three brothers were hard-working, yet different life choices rewarded them differently.

A shortened version of Alexander's statement August 1851 'I'm 48 years of age, miner for 25 years—wrought at Leadhills, Lanarkshire for 14 months, Tyndrum ½ a year, 6 years at Carsphairn, 4 years old Mackland, then 12 years Strontian, some time off after an ironstone fall Mackland's Mine' helps to better understand why our Scottish ancestors chose to escape the subsistence and transient life of a mid-nineteenth century mine.



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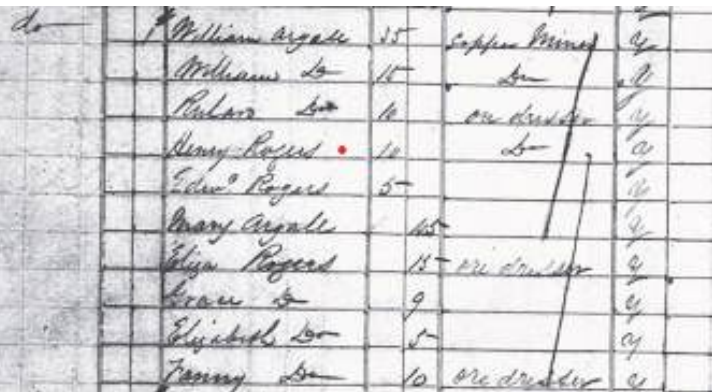
A close-up of one of the photos, reflecting the close connection between Leadhills/Wanlohead and Strontian

Rogers and Argall—copper mining plus gold and other options

The various members of the ROGERS ARGALL family never envisaged that when they sailed on the *Blenheim* to New Plymouth, New Zealand, in 1842, they would be forced to live a very transient miners' lifestyle. Both the Rogers and Argall families were from Illogan, Camborne, Cornwall. The Cornish Peninsula is famous for its tin and copper. Mines over the centuries employed men, women, and not only the older children, but also younger ones. Families were thus dependent on one central source of income. While most of the men worked in the mines, some were employed above ground, but it was the women and girls, the bal maidens, who undertook most of the surface work, from breaking the extracted rocks to the fine sorting of the ore before it was ready for the furnaces. Large rocks were first broken down using long-handled hammers then these were separated by sieving to remove the smaller stones. At another stage of refining, smaller handled hammers were used. Much of it was strenuous, back-breaking work needing to be undertaken by the robust and fittest. The bal maiden uniform supposedly kept the women protected from rain and sun. It consisted of bleached calico or hessian aprons and a gook over their head. Boys washed the pieces of ore or cleaned the slime pits while girls selected the valuable portions for the next stage. The bal maidens also had a role in laying out the washed ore. Older girls and boys were employed as ore dressers.

The Rogers Argalls were an amalgamated family, possibly a marriage of convenience. William Daddow Argall, having lost his wife, and Mary SIMMONS/SYMONS, her husband, William Rogers, in 1837, were married in 1840. The 1841 census makes it very clear that the family were dependent on mining for a living. William Argall and his eldest son, William (15), were copper miners; the middle children, Eliza Rogers (16), Fanny Rogers (13), Henry Rogers (10) and Richard Argall (10), were ore dressers. The three youngest were under 10, Elizabeth (seven) and Grace Argall (five) and Edward Rogers (five), at home with Mary, then in her late 40s. Mary's older children also worked in the mines: William, John and Thomas Rogers. John (20) was living with his eldest sister, Mary, and her husband, Richard LANGMAN, and Thomas with his brother, William Rogers, and his wife Jane.

When the Rogers Argall combination joined the *Blenheim* in 1842, they were not the only ones from South West



do	William Argall	15	Copper Miner	4
	Williams do	15	do	4
	Palmer do	16	ore dresser	4
	Henry Rogers	10	do	4
	Edw Rogers	5		4
	Mary Argall	40		4
	Eliza Rogers	16	ore dresser	4
	Grace do	9		4
	Elizabeth do	7		4
	Fanny do	13	ore dresser	4

1841 English Census. Argall/Rogers family

Cornwall; 63 people on board were from that area. As most would have come from a mining background, one wonders what tale the Plymouth Company agents told that encouraged them to cross the world and end up in New Plymouth, a tiny settlement that had no mining. To understand the situation better, there is a summation from the obituary of William Polkington, a passenger on the *Essex*, a ship arriving just after the *Blenheim*. After landing, the new settlers 'underwent, with others, great hardships owing to the failure of the (Plymouth) company three months after they landed. Everything had to be done by barter, there was no cash available'. There also existed an uneasy relationship with local Māori who were being displaced from their tribal lands. Finally, the Government stepped in. If families would prefer to be in Auckland with work opportunities and possible work on Kawau Island, passage would be available. The records of the families travelling on the Government Brig *Victoria* to Auckland on 2 January 1845 are held at Archives New Zealand, including Wickstead's damning indictment of these Cornish emigrants.

New Plymouth February 10th 1845
Sir,
I enclose a list of the emigrants removed to Auckland in the Government Brig. With one or two exceptions, they are very undesirable settlers.
I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant
I J Wickstead
Resident Agent of New Plymouth
To Colonel William Wakefield
Principal Agent
New Zealand Company
Wellington

Obviously, the settlers wanted the situation sorted. It was not of their making. Cornish miners, like their Gaelic compatriots, expected a fair deal. The Rogers' arrival in Auckland heralded both a better time and a sad one. St Paul's Church records show the marriages of Eliza Rogers to Henry HURFIT and Frances Rogers to William GALLOP on 22 March 1845, and Thomas Rogers' marriage to Jane/Janet BARR in August 1845. The sadness was the death of brother Henry Rogers a week after the girls' weddings; the funeral was 31 March. John Rogers and Charlotte WILKINSON appear to have married in New Plymouth, as she is recorded as Charlotte Rogers on the *Victory* manifest.

The Rogers and other New Plymouth families then moved to Kawau Island. From the dates of the combined Rogers family, it would seem family members were there 1846–1847 and 1850s. William Henry Gallop was born there on 12 March 1846 and christened the following year, 17 January 1847. As his father remarried in September 1848, it would seem Fanny Rogers died sometime after the christening. The best year for copper production on the island was 1846, with 1200 tons compared to 460 the previous year. Tragically, some sharp practices put the whole copper mining business into jeopardy. Disputes

between the old company, Kawau Co., and the new Whitaker Co. landed in court, but more damaging was the Whitaker Co. drilling below the high-tide mark and turning inland to the area of Kawau Co. copper. The breaching of the walls between the two mines meant both were flooded. With such a massive area now open to seawater, the pumps had difficulty keeping the mining areas dry.

So began several years of the transient lifestyle. Luckily for the Rogers, things were better than the bare subsistence level experienced in parts of Scotland. With the Kawau Mine not providing the job opportunities needed, Thomas and Janet Rogers, John and Charlotte Rogers and William Argall Jnr sailed on the *Sam Boddington* to Australia, working in the copper mine just south of Adelaide. It is there that Charlotte Rogers died in April 1847. Shipping records show Thomas and Jane returning to Port Jackson, Sydney, in September 1847 and from various sources, including NZSG's Verna MOSSONG, we know Thomas and Jane became part of the '49ers' that ventured to the California Goldfields. California is pivotal to later events involving family members. California was not a British Colony, unlike Australia and New Zealand. What the miners earned from their diggings was theirs. No costly mining licences were needed.

The Argall side of the family had also dispersed. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported the death of Richard Argall in Bathurst, October 1849. Richard died a few days after his gun accidentally discharged, a result of it getting entangled as he was climbing out of a creek bed. The *Herald* also stated his father had accompanied him to get better medical help. The Argall daughters had also moved to Australia. Eliza died in 1855 in Redbank, Victoria, where it seemed the Argall family members settled. Though Mary's marriage to William Argall had not lasted, she must have been saddened by the death of two children she had helped raise. Also mining in Australia was Edward Rogers, for he married Mary Ann PRATT in Bathurst in 1854, fathered daughter Mary Ann Rogers in 1859, before his wife Mary Ann died in 1861. Within two years, he was back in Auckland and marrying widow Jane KEVEY (née MORAN). Though mining on Kawau Island suffered ups and downs, John Rogers, also with a new wife, Jane ROBERTSON, and his sister Eliza Rogers and husband Henry Hurfit were living there in 1854–1855; both couples had children who were born and christened on Kawau.

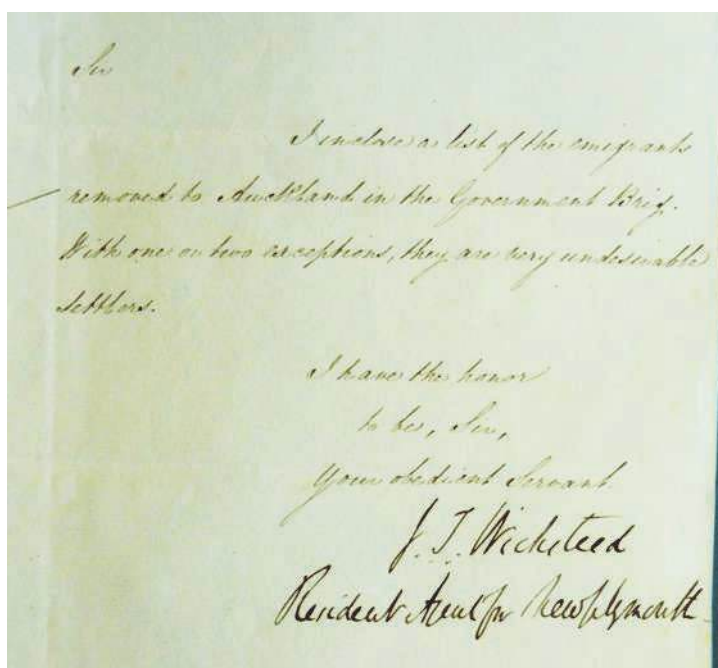
This peripatetic mining lifestyle seems to have ended by the start of the 1860s—Thomas and Jane became hotel owners; John ran a carting business. The Thames gold rush of 1867 brought back these players or their children into the story, but mining by now is becoming a different business; it is now syndicates and machinery. Though money might be invested in such syndicates, it is also the support industries that the family are involved with—hotels and shipping. Eliza, husband Henry Hurfit, daughter Fanny and her husband Charles AMYES were early arrivals to the Thames goldfields. No fortunes were made, and Henry died in 1869, the transient and often sad lifestyle of mining again rearing its ugly head.

Fanny Hurfit, for most of her adult life, is hidden by the male reporting of the day, while husband Charles features prominently in the newspapers, especially as a hotelier in

Christchurch. Yet for the older Rogers family, Fanny's ability to read, write and socialise meant that even as a 17-year-old, her skills were called upon. She is a witness at Edward's marriage to Jane KEVEY. That Thomas Rogers could run a very successful hotel business disguised the fact he could not read. He was able to sign his name. Many of the early Cornish families to New Zealand could not read, but their role as pioneers in shaping New Zealand proved they weren't 'Undesirable Settlers'. Interestingly, years later, Frances Roger's son, William Henry Gallop, became mayor of a Western Australian remote outback gold mining town, Dawn Day.

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The Wickstead Letter 'Undesirable settlers'

Crows and McGeorges—gold mining

Though the lifestyle could become transient, copper and lead mining tended to be long-term industries that survived often over centuries, but gold was a different business; folk whose ordinary day-to-day life was far from the arduous life of a gold miner were so often swept away by the idea of suddenly becoming rich. Our MILNE relative, young Alex PAISLEY, with two other mates, boarded a ship for Australia and its goldfields. They made it as far as Waipapa Point and now lie in the Tatarua Acre, along with others drowned when the *Tatarua* sank. That he was known to likely be one of the bodies was due to a conversation he had on the wharf before he boarded the ship. His mother had no knowledge that her son was heading to Australia.

One of the wider family made 'big money' from gold, but not before earlier transient and sad attempts. The CROWS, originally from Auchenblae, Kincardineshire, had moved to Montrose as work opportunities developed with expansion of the linen mills. Alexander Crow, my great-grandfather, a mechanic, wanted more than the life Montrose was offering, so he and brother Francis sailed for Australia in 1852. Whatever the original intention, the lads were soon in the Bendigo goldfields and by 1853, Alexander Crow had married Ellen PATON, a lass from his hometown Montrose. Their first child, Francis Crow, was born at California Gully in 1854 and died in 1855 aged 11 months. Like all gold fields of the time, life was tough. Besides Alex and Ellen, there was his brother Francis, his wife Caroline INGLIS and Alex's other Crow siblings, James and Jane. A decision was made to return to Melbourne and resume their former trades. Needing something more, the Crow males decided to pool their money and purchase some land. This was in the Green Valley, Gisborne. The Crow parents and other siblings left Montrose and joined them. A large house was built to accommodate the family. Like copper miners John and Edward ROGERS, Alex lost his first wife (Ellen died in 1858), but he soon remarried. She became my great-grandmother, Ann COCHRANE. If Ann thought the gold lust had disappeared from the Crow lads, she was sadly wrong. The discovery of gold in Gabriels Gully saw Alexander and John sail on the *King of Italy* in September 1861, followed by James on the *Alma* in December 1861. All made their way to Gabriels Gully, the Tuapeka goldfields. No big fortunes were made. James stayed in the area, raised a family and became a Lawrence identity. John returned to Australia. Ann and first daughter, Mary Ann, left in Gisborne, finally joined Alex in Dunedin. The peripatetic lifestyle was over.

It is to the family of Alex's sister, Isabel Crow, that gold mining history happened. Her husband James McGEORGE had made a living carting supplies for the Victoria goldfields, and he may well have done the same in Otago, but it is to son Alexander Crow McGeorge that the honours of the biggest strike go. The early mining style of pick, shovel and cradle/pan gave way to mechanised drilling, and on the Kawarau, it was the dredges. Alex McGeorge ran a successful mining enterprise for many years, but to make it big, that had to wait until July 1900. The dredge, *Lady Ranfurly*, had a very profitable week, 1273 ounces of gold in four and a half days. For many years, an exhibition of the event took pride of place in the Cromwell Museum. Toitū, Otago Settlers Museum also added a new exhibition in 2021 featuring the McGeorge gold mining efforts.



***The Lady Ranfurly (OTD), from Toitū Otago Settlers Museum.
The same picture is also in Cromwell Museum
and Kawarau Gold.***

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James William Reilly—soldier, wardsman—Eureka Stockade

My grandchildren's ancestor, James William REILLY, spent much of his life on the edge of significant events, which have been outlined elsewhere. However, this slightly roguish character ended up working as a wardsman in the local hospitals in both Kumara and Coromandel, early gold mining areas. A wardsman is similar to a male nurse. Also, at Kumara he went into a pony express business with Thomas RYAN. His life at Kumara, as a wardsman and fast delivery service operator, would have been uneventful and never made the newspaper if his business partner, Thomas Ryan, had not been accused of murdering a local, Joseph DANIELS. The two 1877 trials linked to the murder were two of the most expensive trials in New Zealand history at that time. James was called as a witness, hence the detail about his life. Ryan was finally cleared of the murder charge. James's time as a wardsman in the Coromandel area resulted in praise for his handling of a patient and noted for his dispute with the hospital superintendent. Meanwhile, his wife, Mary Ann Reilly (née McCOY) had followed James back to New Zealand, a mother of two surviving children of her six. Leaving Melbourne with its years of births, deaths and poverty to the bustling Hokitika and its thriving community being fuelled by the gold rush might have seemed appealing. The marriage did not survive, but Mary Ann, always a worker, opened a haberdashery, then moved to Greymouth where she ran a successful 'Servants Registry'. However, James's exploits as a wardsman are not why James is the final part of the four vignettes about family and traditional manual mining.

Eighteen-year-old James William Reilly of the 12th Regiment of Foot, fresh off the *Empress Eugene* at the port of Melbourne, marched straight into Australian history. He was one of the soldiers involved in the Eureka Stockade Affray 1855. Discontent over the excessive fees gold miners were expected to pay for their mining licences and the treatment they were receiving from the authorities, especially by the goldfields police, had fermented unrest and civil disobedience, particularly in the Ballarat goldfields. The fact that thousands of miners were trying to organise

change through petitions and the 'correct channels' was ignored. The new governor was determined to stamp his authority, and troops were sent from Melbourne to quell any disturbances. The 12th and 40th Regiments were given this task. The storming of the Eureka Stockade has gone down in history, with much written about the event. Of those miners in the stockade and surrounding area, several were killed, others were wounded and many were imprisoned. The whole stockade was overrun in 10 to 15 minutes. The much longer search through the miners' encampments followed. But while order may have been restored, the governor was to find the event turned in favour of the gold miners. The storming of the Eureka Stockade has become part of Australia's 'myth-making', the underdog against the establishment. Certainly, much has been written about it. It has been labelled as a fight for democracy, bringing about the opening up of land ownership and expanded enfranchisement. For some it is seen as establishing independence from tyrannical authority. The concept of paying a government licence to be able to dig for gold was an enigma to those who had moved from the California goldfields. The storming of the Eureka Stockade is sometimes described as the 'Ned Kelly' event of the goldfields, a seminal moment in Australia's concept of itself as a country. The dreaded diggers' mining licence was abolished and replaced by the cheaper yearly miners' right. The miners achieved their enfranchisement.

James William Reilly probably never thought of his first days in Australia as part of its seminal history. He would not have known our wider whanau of Highland lead miners and Cornish copper miners were also striving for a better life. It is doubtful that he ever ventured down mine shafts to know of their precarious, transient mining lifestyles. The Eureka Stockade affray brought changes, but the biggest change was the mechanisation and syndication of mining.

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Badge 12th Regiment of Foot East Suffolk



Finding the female diggers: women and mining in New Zealand

Julia Bradshaw

While undertaking research for my book *Digging Deep: Women on New Zealand's Goldfields*, I came across more women involved in mining than I could include in the book. However, I remain fascinated by the topic and would like to get to grips with why, when and how women were involved in mining. I know that some were physically mining but women were also mine owners, investors and speculators.

Women mined on all of New Zealand's goldfields. Unfortunately, the presence and names of Māori women were seldom recorded by Europeans but wāhine were mining in Golden Bay, Otago, on the West Coast and at Thames. In fact, Aniria (wife of Paratene WHAKAUTU) was one of the three prospectors who found payable gold at Thames in June 1867.¹

Legally women were able to hold miner's rights and other mining privileges such as water races and extended claims. New Zealand's Gold Fields Acts referred to persons rather than men, although the Miners Representation Act 1862

made it clear that the only people with a miner's right who could vote were men. To date there has been little research on female miners and this is understandable as it is a difficult topic to investigate. Apart from attempting to document women who mined, what interests me is the agency that these women had during a time when women were expected to remain at home and men to manage business matters.

By the 1890s attitudes to women mining were changing and the occasional reminiscence includes accounts of (usually unnamed) women mining in remote localities. In some cases, we only know that women physically mined because they lived to a good age. When Ellen FORDER (c 1828–1916) died at Clyde when she was 87 years old, she was remembered as 'a remarkably strong woman' who worked in the diggings at Otago 'doing her share of the work with the best of the men'.² How many female miners have slipped off the pages of history simply because they didn't live long enough?

Image above:

Miners at the Sons of Freedom claim, Blackwater. Left to right: Madge Armstrong, Nellie Gardiner, Harry Gardiner, Maud Gardiner, Jos Divis and Eric Bradley. Jos Divis photograph, Alexander Turnbull Library.

When Biddy of the Buller died in 1899, she was described as New Zealand's only female miner, yet a perusal of the *New Zealand Gazette* and mining records at Archives New Zealand shows that many women had mining rights or privileges from the 1860s through to at least the 1970s.³

Who was mining?

The circumstances in which women became involved in mining vary. Wife and husband teams worked together particularly on new fields. Ann HAMMOND (c 1836–1910) was working in the remote Upper Anatoki River at Golden Bay in July 1858 with her de facto partner, Henry COOK.⁴ Another Ann and her husband, John GRAY, were early at the rush to Gabriels Gully and Ann worked the cradle while her husband was getting the gold-bearing wash dirt.⁵ Also, at Gabriels Gully were 'Big Maggie' and her husband Peter. While Peter worked in the shaft, Maggie, who was a powerful woman, operated the windlass.⁶

Women also worked together. James MacKAY, writing about the first discoveries of gold in New Zealand, recorded that two married women camping at Brandy Point on the Aorere goldfields made a 'good living' for more than a year by retrieving gold from crevices along the side of the river using knives and tin dishes.⁷

In Otago, at Nokomai, Anne FITZGERALD and Eleanor METCALFE were mining together but we only know this because Anne was killed in a mining accident in 1866. The claim that Eleanor Metcalfe was working was registered in her husband's name and but for Anne's unfortunate death, there would be no record of either woman mining.⁸ And at least one woman worked on her own. Scottish-born Isabella COWAN (c 1829–1895) was nearly 60 years of age when she applied for a licence for a head race at Moonlight Creek,

Blackwater, in 1888 and she was still mining in 1893 when she registered to vote, giving her occupation as miner.^{9,10}

Women were also involved in mining as shareholders and owners of both gold and coal mines. In Otago Sarah McGUICKIN had a coal mine at Cambrians and Margaret BECK had the Idaburn Coal Pit, while in Southland Jessie COUSER owned the Robin Hood Coal Pit which was managed by her husband.^{11,12}

At Thames, Bridget DAYKIN and Mary NORBURY were prominent shareholders but they were certainly not the only women to have shares in mining companies in that district. Lists of shareholders found in newspapers and the *New Zealand Gazette* reveal that some women were in a good financial position despite their relatively poorly paid work. Norah POWER, a servant at Lyell, had 1000 shares in the Bendigo Quartz-Mining Company, and was one of the largest shareholders. Other shareholders include laundress Charlotte McDOWALL with 250 shares. Charlotte also had 666 shares in the Auburn Quartz-Mining Company at Lyell, as did another laundress, Caroline KERR.¹³

Women sometimes ended up managing their husband's mining interests. Seventeen-year-old Agnes WILSON (1849–1915) married 40-year-old miner Joseph NORMAN of Tinkers Gully at Clyde in 1866. When he died nine years later, Agnes had five children under the age of nine but found time to manage the couple's most important asset, a one-fifth share in a head water race at Sugar Pot Gully at Tinkers. Joseph had been admitted to the Lunatic Asylum at Dunedin in October 1873 with 'delusional insanity'. Agnes employed a man to undertake her husband's share of work in the alluvial claim fed by the water race and by October 1876 she had made a profit of £85. Although Agnes married



Ellen Forder Brown who had mined for gold at Dunstan during the mid-1860s. This photograph was taken in 1908.
Central Stories, Alexandra, WGM.2



Ann Gray (1825–1912), who mined with her husband during the rush to Gabriels Gully in 1861.
Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena, G-683/055/001

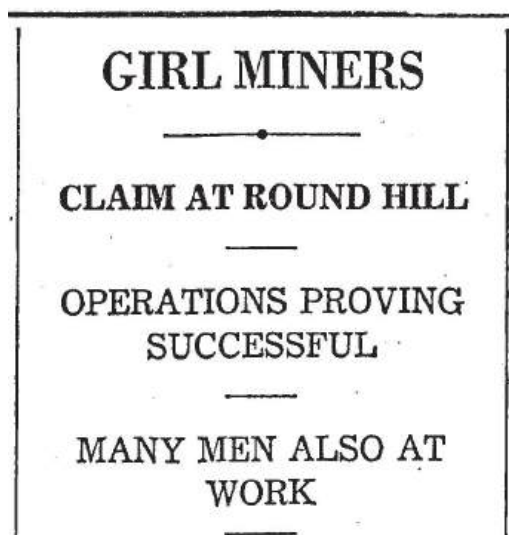
twice more, she continued her ownership of mining privileges in her own name until at least 1895.¹⁴

While some women took over mining claims through necessity, others developed a keen interest independently of their marital status. After becoming a widow in England, Susannah SMOOTHY (c 1800–1872) joined her children in Victoria and later came to Otago with her daughter. Here she took up a mining lease at Gabriels Gully in December 1865, was a shareholder of the Barracouta Quartz Mining Company at Arrow River and the Dry Bread Water Race Company in 1866. The following year she was part of a group applying for a water race at Tuapeka River. At the time of her death, Susanna also owned £250 worth of shares in a coalmine.^{15,16}

It was a similar case with Emma BARBER (c 1833–1887) of Hamilton, Otago, who was widowed in 1871 and left with an insolvent estate. Emma made enough money from her hotel and store to invest in mining and bought shares in the Maryborough Gold-Mining and Quartz-Crushing Company (Macetown) in 1881 and in the same year purchased the Perseverance Mining Company for £4000.^{17,18}

During the Great Depression of the 1930s there was a renewed interest in mining. And, again, women were involved. Maud and Nellie, daughters of Harry GARDINER, and their friend Madge ARMSTRONG mined in Harry's ironically named Sons of Freedom claim. Nellie later recalled that it was cold, back-breaking work but she stuck with mining for many years, eventually taking over both the mining claim and the local Post Office from her father.^{19,20}

Women were also mining on West Coast beaches, at Golden Bay and at Lindis Pass, while in Southland the presence of 'girl miners' was reported at Round Hill. The 'Misses Jordan' were likely Isabella (born 1910) and Mavis (born 1912), daughters of Isabella Ellen and Alick JORDAN of Invercargill. The sisters were working one of about 40 claims in the area. After arriving, they pitched their tent, installed tram rails, fluming and did other necessary work before commencing to dig and 'not once did they seek male assistance'. According to an account in the *Southland Times*, their claim had the most 'workmanlike' appearance and was the most successfully operated.²¹



Southland Times, 16 January 1934, p6

Digging deeper

Sources thus far have been family memories, newspapers and the Warden's Court records held by Archives New Zealand at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Very few of these have been digitised. Survival of records from the various Warden's Courts is patchy so a complete survey will not be possible, but I am hopeful that I can reveal stories of women's work and investment.

Women's names appear in applications for claims and, as they are not always last, I am assuming that names were listed according to amount invested or the number of mining rights held. In 1896 Catherine FORBES of Orepuki is listed first of three partners in applications for a water race and a dam but she is listed third in an application for a tail race.²²

The increased availability of the *New Zealand Gazette* makes female shareholders and licence holders more visible (thank you Luke HOWISON). I have found a few tantalising photographs such as the one kindly supplied by Te Hiko Museum in Riverton, which shows an unnamed woman working in a tail race, probably during the 1930s.



This blurry snapshot shows an unnamed woman working in a claim near Round Hill, c 1930s. Courtesy of Te Hiko Museum, RI.P33.93.444.

Women's involvement in mining is far from being an isolated and rare occurrence. Women were involved in all kinds of mining, with the possible exception of underground quartz mining, which was done by company men working for wages. At this stage I have more questions than answers but intend to dig deeper. I would welcome contact from anybody who has a female ancestor involved in mining or any other information or photographs that might be useful.

Julia Bradshaw
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(Editor's Note: Julia will be speaking at the AFFHO Congress in February—see the AFFHO article elsewhere in this journal.)

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**Agnes Wilson, who married Joseph Norman at Clyde in 1866, seen here with her third husband Christopher Huddleston and the couple's first two children (Agnes had six older children).
Courtesy of Hilary Rowley.**



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Certificates can be accessed either through our online email service or through our postal service. Details on how to access these are available on our website. An index is included in the Kiwi Collection.

First Families

First Families is a collection of information about families, where the family emigrated to New Zealand before and including 1901 and where partners were married in New Zealand before and including 1901.

An index has been compiled from family record sheets, contributed by both members of the NZSG and non-members. Each family record sheet includes the names of three generations and their spouses where known. It can include parents who may not have come to New Zealand, thus bridging the gap between New Zealand and the country of origin.

Surnames can be searched by members in the database accessible on the First Families page on the website. An index and images are also included in the Kiwi Collection.

Pre-1856 New Zealand Marriage Records

This is a collection of New Zealand marriages that took place before compulsory civil registration. The collection contains over 28,500 entries from sources including civil registration entries, church records, newspaper notices, family and social history publications, Māori Mission records, Bible entries, ministers' diary and journal entries and submissions from NZSG members to name a few.

Access is through Research Services or by subscription to the Kiwi Collection. Contributions can be made through a form available online which can be emailed or posted to us.

Pedigree Registration

This is a collection of Pedigree Registration forms submitted by members. Every surname on the forms is indexed. These names appear in the Kiwi Collection.

An online search request form is on our website. A contribution form can also be found there. Please note the submission requirements.

Funeral Service Sheets

One of our newer Collections, Funeral Service Sheets are collected by members all over the country. An index is included in the Kiwi Collection. Access is through Research Services.

NZSG (Griffis) Illegitimacies

This collection is a name-searchable database involving illegitimate births in New Zealand between 1877 and 1950 that were available in public records, either at local court houses or National Archives. Virtually all of these records have now been transferred to Archives New Zealand.

The database includes details of the child (if named) the mother and the father, the location of the event, the record type and repository. Query results provide basic information only. Researchers are encouraged to go back to the original source record for fuller details.

Access is only to records more than 100 years old and is through Research Services or by subscription to the Kiwi Collection.

New Zealand Cemeteries

We have produced cemetery transcriptions for approximately 1400 cemeteries nationwide, for burials from 1812 through to 2020. Most municipal cemeteries are included, but a significant proportion of this collection includes private cemeteries, Māori Urupa and remote burial locations. Access is through Research Services or by subscription to the Kiwi Collection.

Obituaries Collection

This collection includes contributions from members nationwide from sources such as national and regional newspapers, club newsletters and periodicals. An index is included in the Kiwi Collection. Access details are on our website.

School Records

These records are a valuable resource for family historians because they not only put families together in local communities, but allow us to trace their movements from place to place. The NZSG has been transcribing and indexing school APW (Admission, Progress and Withdrawal) records from their earliest beginnings and over time has accumulated records for almost 2000 schools nationwide dating from 1858 to present time.

An index is available on the Kiwi Collection. Access is through our NZSG School Records Officer— see website for current details, or by subscription to the Kiwi Collection.

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Check out mining topics at the 2027 AFFHO Congress

Pauline Weeks

Early bird registration is now open for the 2027 AFFHO Congress being held in Wellington, New Zealand, from 11–14 February 2027. Organised by the NZSG, the Congress will take place at Rutherford House at the Victoria University of Wellington.

Two of the many speakers will be talking on related mining topics.

Michelle Patient

Well-known Australian genealogist Michelle PATIENT will be presenting 'Gold Connections'. Past President of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, Michelle's extensive experience in genealogy includes being a DNA consultant on the SBS 'Every Family Has a Secret' programme. She is currently a genealogist on TVNZ's 'My Family Mystery' and, with Fiona Brooker, presents Ancestry's Talking Family History. Michelle also volunteers for several genealogy societies around the world and generously gives her time to helping those researching their family history.



Michelle said that studying chemistry and geology taught her about understanding what materials are made of, how they were created and where to find them. Working in a Civil Engineering quality assurance laboratory trained her eye to discern the value of the materials being used. These are

'essential skills needed for genealogists who mine available records to gain a deeper understanding of the stories they reveal about our ancestors', she said.

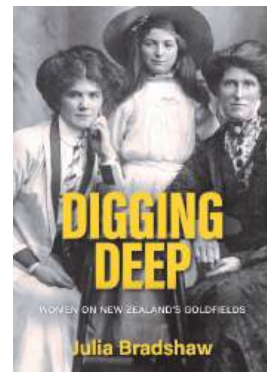
The strong call of riches and opportunity drew many to migrate out to the British Colonies. Attendees at Congress will be able to join Michelle as she traces gold rush-driven migrations within and between the colonies and, in some cases, there and back again.

Julia Bradshaw

Currently Kairauhi Matua Senior Curator Human History at Canterbury Museum, Ōtautahi Christchurch, New Zealand, Julia BRADSHAW has worked in museums for more than 30 years. She has a background in West Coast and Otago history and a special interest in New Zealand's gold rushes, Chinese, women and remote places. Her seven books and numerous articles have covered these topics. Julia has presented at 14 conferences since 2017 and has delivered many other public presentations.

Julia says that putting flesh on the bones of women in your family tree is tough and it is understandable that entries for

women are sometimes limited to marriage, birth of children and death. In her presentation to Congress, she will be drawing on stories that appear in her latest book *Digging Deep: Women on New Zealand's Goldfields* (2026). Julia will share the sources she used for adding texture and information to women's lives. She encourages researchers to ask: what were women doing besides being wives and mothers? How did women contribute to their family's income, and, despite the sexist laws of the time, what did they achieve or try to achieve?



In addition to her talk on the goldfields, Julia will also be joining a panel discussion along with historians Catherine BISHOP and Charlotte MACDONALD on using archival sources to shine light on women's lives which were often hidden in the shadows.

Uncovering the stories of the women in our family history is often a challenging task and their achievements were frequently overshadowed or attributed to the men around them. Many changed their surnames upon marriage, while others left behind only fragments of their lives through photographs, letters or family memories. As a result, their voices can be difficult to trace, yet each discovery serves as a meaningful reminder that their lives and contributions were significant and deserve to be remembered and celebrated.

Researching women will also feature as one of the main themes at the Congress. Attendees will hear how researching the women in our family history can bring to light stories of courage, resilience and quiet determination that have shaped our lives today. Through times of adversity and celebration, these women nurtured their families, preserved traditions and strengthened their communities. Their enduring legacy reminds us that strong and resilient women are not only the foundation of every family but have long been the backbone of a nation.

See the 2027 AFFHO website for more details and early bird registration—affhocongress.org/

Pauline Weeks:
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(Editor's Note: See Julia's article 'Finding the female diggers: women and mining in New Zealand' elsewhere in this journal.)



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Looking beyond the family tree: how place and neighbours reveal hidden connections

Candice Naus

For many genealogists, the family tree is where everything begins. We trace names, dates and relationships, carefully building line by line, generation by generation. Over time, this structure becomes a record of identity and lineage. It gives shape to the past and provides a framework for understanding where we come from.

Yet, for all its value, the family tree has its limits. It shows us who people were connected to by blood or marriage, but it does not always show us how they lived. It does not reveal the rhythms of daily life, the people they interacted with beyond their immediate family, or the environments that shaped their decisions.

One of the most overlooked aspects of genealogical research is place. Not simply where an event occurred, but where people actually lived, who lived around them, and how those surroundings influenced their lives. When we consider our ancestors in their physical and social environment, a different kind of understanding emerges.

My own interest in this approach began while researching early settlers in Taranaki as part of a book I am currently writing. At the time, my focus was on establishing timelines and movements, understanding when families arrived and how they settled. Like many researchers, I was working primarily through records, building out family lines as accurately as possible.

However, a shift occurred when I began to look more closely at where these families were living. This pattern became even more apparent as I continued my research into early settler families in Taranaki. Land records for early Taranaki settlers, including Crown Grants held at Archives New Zealand and the 1842 Carrington plan of New Plymouth, provide precisely this kind of locational detail, showing not only who held land but where those holdings sat in relation to one another. By examining these records alongside family relationships, it became possible to see how certain families were not only connected through later marriages but had lived within the same small communities from the outset. In some cases, families who would later be joined through marriage had originally settled in close proximity, their lives overlapping long before those formal connections were established.

Since then, I have noticed further overlaps within my research. Members of my maternal and paternal lines, which I had always considered entirely separate, were in some cases living within the same settlements. It is quite possible that these families knew each other, shared experiences, and were part of the same local community long before their descendants were connected in later generations.

Connections such as these are easily missed when our focus remains fixed on direct lineage. Historically, people did not

live in isolation. Families settled near one another, often migrating in groups or maintaining ties with those from the same place of origin. In early New Zealand settlements, this was particularly evident. Groups of settlers from the same regions of England or Ireland frequently arrived together and established themselves in close proximity. Familiarity, shared background and practical necessity all influenced where people lived.

Neighbours were not incidental. They were witnesses, associates, employers, friends and sometimes extended family in all but name. They appear in records as witnesses on marriages or wills, informants on death certificates, neighbours on census pages, and adjacent landholders in property records. When viewed individually, these names can seem peripheral. When viewed collectively, they begin to form a network.

Looking at neighbours can also help resolve uncertainty. In cases where multiple individuals share the same name, the surrounding households can provide distinguishing context. If one individual consistently appears alongside the same neighbouring families across multiple records, those patterns can help confirm identity in a way that isolated documents cannot. Patterns also emerge when families move. The same surnames appearing together across different locations can indicate shared migration. These movements, when viewed through place rather than lineage alone, often reveal relationships that have not been formally recorded.

The challenge lies in how this information is traditionally accessed. Records are typically examined in isolation. A census page, an electoral roll, or a directory entry provides a snapshot, but rarely a sense of continuity. Without a way to bring location and proximity into focus, much of the surrounding context remains fragmented. This becomes particularly evident in rural settlements, where families may have remained in the same area for generations. Without viewing these households collectively within their environment, the depth of their connections is easily overlooked.

Mapping where people lived offers a way to address this. By placing individuals within a geographic context, relationships that were previously hidden begin to surface. Streets, clusters of households and recurring patterns of proximity form a more complete picture. Movement between locations becomes easier to trace. Families can be understood not only as individual units, but as part of a wider network shaped by place.

This shift in perspective also changes the kinds of questions we ask. Instead of focusing only on who our ancestors were, we begin to ask who lived around them, how those communities were structured, and how people interacted within them. These questions can lead to meaningful

discoveries. A witness listed on a marriage certificate may not be a distant acquaintance but a neighbour who lived a few doors away. A family that appears repeatedly alongside your ancestors in electoral rolls may represent a group that migrated together. A cluster of burials within the same section of a cemetery may reflect extended kinship or long-standing community ties.

When these elements are considered together, the past begins to take on greater depth and texture. There are also practical ways genealogists can begin incorporating this approach into their research. One method is to examine a single record, such as a census or electoral roll, and extend attention beyond the household of interest. Recording the names of neighbouring households and tracing them across other records can reveal patterns that would otherwise remain hidden.

Land and property records provide another valuable avenue. Identifying adjacent landowners can help establish who lived nearby and whether those individuals appear elsewhere in your research. In early New Zealand settlements, where land allocation was often recorded in detail, this can be particularly revealing.

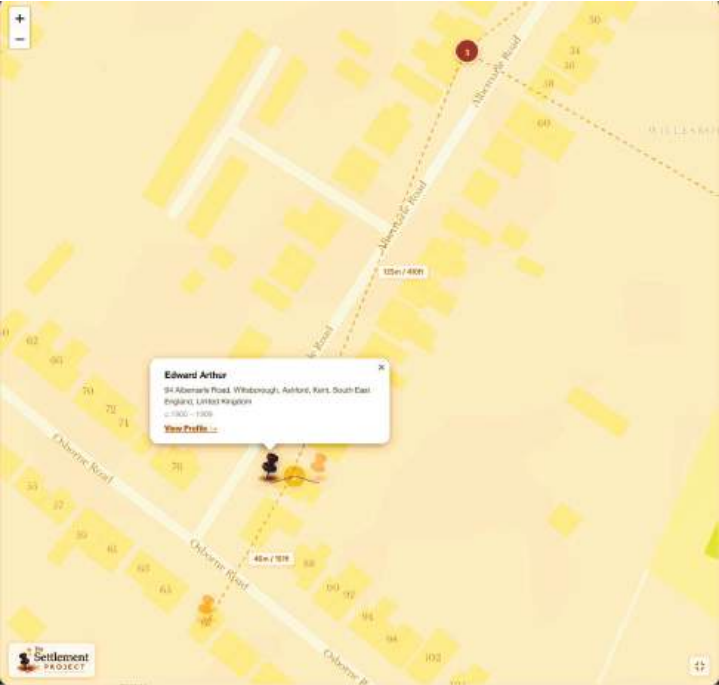
Cemetery records also offer insight when viewed collectively. Rather than focusing on a single burial, examining who is buried nearby can uncover family connections, shared origins or community groupings.

Even small details can become significant. Repeated surnames among witnesses, recurring names within a confined area or consistent proximity across multiple records can all contribute to building a more complete understanding of a person's life.

A clear example of this approach emerged in my own research in Willesborough, Ashford, Kent, England. At first, the records relating to Edward ARTHUR and Ethel MARSHALL appeared straightforward. Their marriage in 1909 could be confirmed through official documentation, and their identities were clear. However, it was only when I began to examine where they had lived that a more complete story emerged.

distance apart, approximately 46 metres, typically taking less than one minute to walk. This proximity suggests that their marriage was not simply coincidental, but the result of growing up within the same local environment.

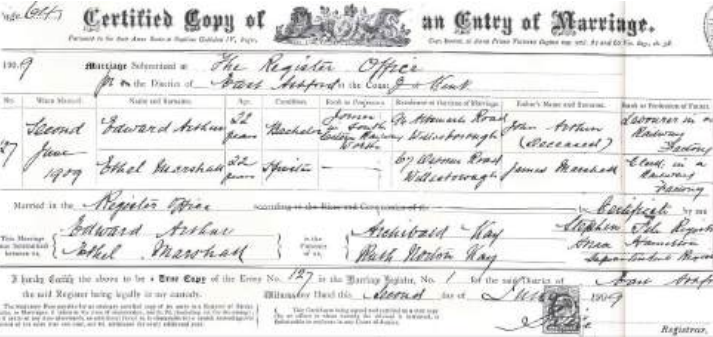
Further records strengthen this picture. By the time of the 1911 census, Edward and Ethel were living together at 59 Albemarle Road, remaining within the same neighbourhood in which they had both lived before their marriage.



The Settlement Project map showing 59 and 94 Albemarle Road and 67 Osborne Road, Willesborough

What initially appeared as a simple relationship recorded in a certificate becomes, through the lens of place, a story of two families living within the same small community, their lives intersecting long before their marriage formally connected them. Without considering where they lived, this connection would remain flat and transactional. By looking at proximity, it becomes something more human and more understandable.

Examples such as this are not isolated. Increasingly, genealogists are recognising that breakthroughs often come not from a single record, but from the relationships between people within a shared place. By examining neighbours, tracing patterns of proximity, and following communities across time, researchers are able to uncover connections that would otherwise remain hidden. This approach is not a replacement for careful documentation or proof. As with all genealogical research, conclusions must be supported by evidence. However, looking at neighbours can provide the crucial clue that directs research towards the correct answer.



1909 marriage certificate of Edward Arthur and Ethel Marshall. Arthur Family Collection

The marriage record shows Edward Arthur residing at 94 Albemarle Road, Willesborough, an address also associated with his parents through probate records. Ethel Marshall, at the time of the marriage, was living with her family at 67 Osborne Road. These two addresses were only a short

In recent years, digital tools have begun to support this way of thinking. One approach is to map individuals to specific locations and gradually build out the surrounding households over time. This allows researchers to visualise not only individual lives, but the development of entire communities.

The Settlement Project is one example of this approach. It enables researchers to pin where individuals lived, automatically transcribe records and begin linking people through neighbouring households. Over time, these individual entries can form a broader settlement, where the focus shifts from isolated family lines to the collective story of a place.

This concept of building a settlement is particularly powerful. Instead of a static tree, it creates a living environment where individuals, families, and neighbours are connected through place. As more information is added, the settlement becomes richer, reflecting not only who lived there but how the community evolved over time. The intention is not to replace traditional genealogical methods, but to extend them. By incorporating place and proximity, researchers are able to uncover connections that might otherwise remain hidden within the gaps between records.

Even without the use of digital tools, the principle remains valuable. When faced with a research challenge, it can be useful to step back from the individual and consider the environment in which they lived. Who else appears nearby? What patterns can be observed? Which names recur across records within the same location? Often, the answer lies not in a single document, but in the relationships between many. Over time, this way of thinking can begin to reshape not only how we conduct research, but how we interpret the past. When we place individuals within their communities, we begin to see patterns of support, dependence and shared experience that are not visible through lineage alone.

This perspective also brings a greater sense of empathy to genealogical research. Rather than viewing our ancestors as isolated entries, we begin to understand them as people whose lives were shaped by those around them. Their choices, movements and relationships were influenced as much by proximity and circumstance as by family ties.

In many ways, this reflects how communities functioned historically. Identity was not defined solely by family, but

by place. Villages, streets and neighbourhoods formed the framework of daily life. By reconstructing these environments, even in part, we gain a more grounded and meaningful understanding of the past.

Genealogy is not only about tracing lineage. It is about understanding lives. Those lives were not lived in isolation, but within communities shaped by proximity, familiarity, and shared experience. When we begin to see our ancestors not just as names on a tree, but as people who lived among others, influenced by those around them, the past becomes more than a record. It becomes a place we can begin to recognise.

Candice Naus

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Edward Arthur in uniform with Ethel (née Marshall) and their children, c 1916–1917. Arthur Family Collection

Samuel Hawkes: A trans-Tasman miner

Allan Hawkes

My great-grandfather, Samuel ('Sam') HAWKES, was an Essex man who migrated firstly to New Zealand, and subsequently to Tasmania, as a young lad seeking his fortune in the gold and tin mining industries in the mid-nineteenth century.

Sam was born at Witham, Essex (70 kilometres north-east of central London) on 27 September 1845, the fifth child of William, a gardener (1810–1891) and Eleanor ('Ellen'), née CAVANAGH (1814–1894). He was to have six brothers and three sisters. By March 1851, at the time of the census, he was living with his family in Duke Street, Chelmsford, the county town of Essex. He was recorded as a five-year-old scholar. In April 1861 (census) he was residing in Patching Hall Lane, in nearby Broomfield, with his family and was now the eldest child at home, recorded age 16 (actually 15), with no occupation recorded.

At the age of 15 or 16 years he took up a seafaring life, perhaps influenced by his older brother, Joseph (1842–1914), who had become a sailor. Sam sailed on the barque *Amethea* (perhaps *Aletheia*) to Malta, Constantinople (now Istanbul) and other places in the Mediterranean. Upon his return home to England, it seems he heard news from his older brother, William (1836–1916), who had left home before the 1861 Census. William, by this time, was in New Zealand, attracted by the discovery of gold in Otago. (The Tasmanian Gabriel Read had made the first significant gold discovery in Otago in May 1861.) This had inspired Sam to leave England again in 1862, aged 17, as a seaman on the ship *Moneta* of Liverpool. It is said he 'jumped ship' in Sydney ('Hawkes, who detested sea life, took the

opportunity to leave on his own accord'). He used his nautical experience and worked his passage to Melbourne, where, after a brief stay of three weeks, shipped on the barque *Onward* of Liverpool to Dunedin. He arrived in late 1862. At that time the great gold rush to Gabriels Gully was in full swing.

He left Dunedin and struck out south-west across country for Tokomairiro (now Milton), a distance of 55 kilometres, which he accomplished in a day. The following day he got work on the roads at £3 10s per week, a high wage for a youth. Most young men had caught the gold fever, and it was difficult to get men to undertake road work. The lure of the goldfields eventually attracted Sam and in the following year, 1863, when he was 18, he joined the fossickers in search of the precious metal and worked on various fields at Hyde (discovered late 1862), Hamiltons (October 1863), Shotover (November 1862) and Dunstan Creek (later St Bathans, 1864). Most of these prospectors were in their late teens and twenties, so Sam was amongst his own age group.

In a letter Sam wrote from Tasmania to his son, Hubert Bonython Hawkes, in New Zealand on 17 December 1931, he said: '... your visit to the home of the Gabriels Gully Miner 1861—reminds me of my first location in N.Z.—Tokomiro [sic] [Tokomairiro]—now called Milton—August 1862—I was then 17 in Sept'. In a later letter of 16 July 1936, he said: 'Re Gabriels Gully it was opened in 1861. I was in Tokamirio [sic] in August 1862 in September was 17 years of age—so was only a young boy but remember meeting Gabriel Reed [sic] at Kapsticks [sic] Hotel at Tokomirio [sic] (now Milton) & had a talk with him—his father was an Essex man and I remember his uncle I Reid [sic] a farmer'. At the time he wrote this, he was 90 years old and he was recalling an incident 74 years earlier.

He placed a notice in the *Otago Daily Times* on 29 March 1864: 'William Hawkes, of Chelmsford, Essex, write to your brother, Samuel Hawkes. Address, Post Office, Dunedin.' Sam eventually located William at a gold mining camp where he was working on the Shotover River near Queenstown, Otago. Gold was first discovered on this river in November 1862. This was followed by the largest gold rush ever to occur in Otago. The Shotover seemed to the first diggers to be an inexhaustible source of wealth and returns were reckoned in pounds rather than mere ounces. It is said that William made a fortune in the vicinity of £40,000. He is reputed to have gone through three fortunes and eventually lost most of his money because of his drinking habits.

Sam was fairly successful with his gold mining exploits and in 1865 left Otago, crossed the Canterbury Plains and traversed Arthur's Pass and Otira Gorge to Hokitika on the West Coast. Here he worked on the Kaniere field (discovered April 1865) up the Hokitika River, a short distance from the town.

In 1868 Sam, then aged 23, joined the gold rush to the



Sam Hawkes, c 1890
Hawkes family collection

newly opened Thames goldfield (1867) on the Coromandel Peninsula. The gold here was in quartz and required the formation of companies to raise capital to mine the subterranean reefs and process the quartz through stamper batteries to yield the gold. On the Otago fields he would have been working on his own account but at Thames he was most likely a miner on wages.

He stayed at Thames for about 12 months before returning to Otago to work on the Moke Creek goldfield (discovered 1862, with a bigger discovery in 1869) near Queenstown. He remained there until 1871. He had made good money and decided to make a holiday trip back to England. Consequently, early in 1872, Sam travelled to Melbourne and booked a passage on the wool ship *Lady Jocelyn* for London via Cape Horn, embarking on 30 January 1872. The voyage would take about 60 days. He had been away for 10 years, and the homecoming of the young man was a great event. However, the desire for further adventure and travel prevailed, and after a stay of six months he returned to New Zealand. From there he then travelled across the Tasman to the Stanthorpe tin mines (begun 1872) in southern Queensland. Here he was employed as manager of a Doncaster tin mine and worked on Herding Yard Creek (just across the state border in New South Wales). This was his first experience of mining alluvial tin.

Alluvial tin was first discovered in north-east Tasmania in December 1872, with significant deposits located along the Boobyalla River and upper Ringarooma River in 1874. Mining had begun around Branhholm in 1875. Sam had obviously heard about this promising new field and headed to Tasmania in 1876. He arrived at Launceston on the north coast aboard the *Derwent* and walked the 90 kilometres with his swag on his back, in true pioneering spirit, to Branhholm in the north-east. He was now 31 years old. In a letter of 16 July 1936 to his son, Hubert, he said, 'this is the 60th year of my sojourn in Tasmania August 1876 & 1936—it is a long journey and have had a fairly good time—'.

He took up leases of about 80 acres (32 hectares) at Ruby

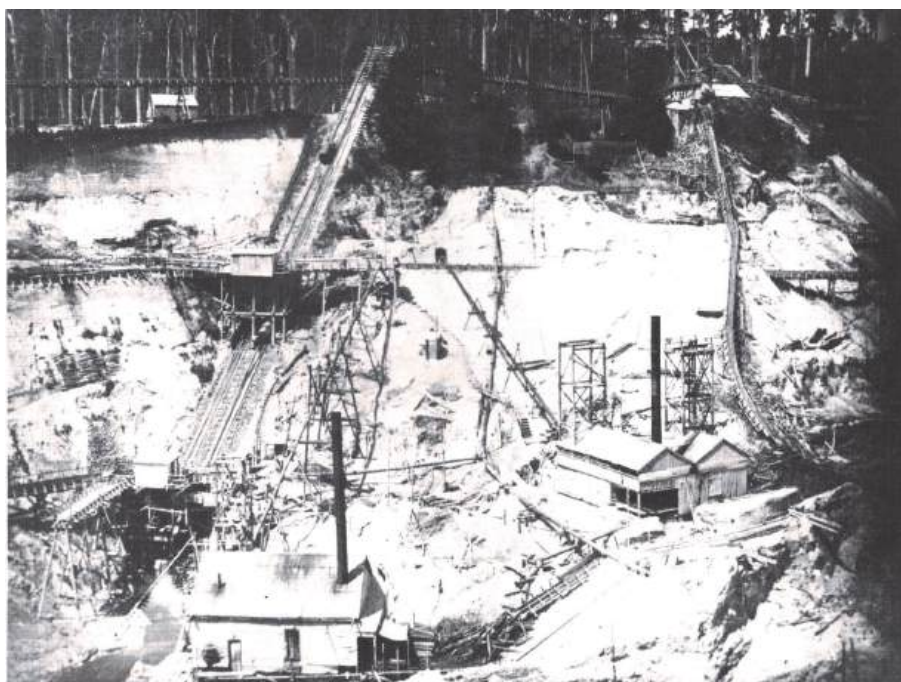
Flat (now known as Ruby Flats), about three kilometres from the small town of Branhholm, where he employed local European labour on wages while numerous Chinese were on tribute. (This refers to an historic mining system where self-employed miners agreed to work a company's or individual's lease for a share of the profits. The 'tributers' were paid a fixed percentage of the value of the tin ore (cassiterite) they produced or paid at an agreed rate per pound of ore.) A water race approximately 6.4 kilometres in length, from Black Creek to a dam, supplied water pressure for sluicing the alluvial deposits.

Fears of a Chinese invasion of Tasmania's north-east tin fields were a big issue in the 1870s. Europeans were afraid. The industrious Chinese were mining their tin, and they were willing to work hard. Mine managers were forced to use Chinese as tributers because when tenders were called, the Chinese tendered the lowest. A modern-day report in *The Sunday Examiner Express* (Launceston) in 1983 quoted a retired miner who, when he was young, was told the story by a miner and bushman of an abortive attempt to stop the Chinese from entering the town of Branhholm in September 1877:

Word spread that Sam Hawkes was walking in from Scottsdale about 50 Johns (Chinese) to work mines at Ruby Flat on tribute. As Hawkes and his Johns came down the hill into the town, we mustered at the wooden bridge over the Ringarooma River, near the hotel. Fortified with beer and feeling brave, we told Hawkes in no uncertain terms to get his 'Chinks out of here'. Hawkes led his men on to the bridge, then pulled a gun and threatened to shoot anyone in his way. I stood my ground then looked around to find my mates had gone. The Battle of Branhholm was the shortest in history. The Chinese had a walkover win. At the peak there were about 300 Chinese mining in the Ruby Flat area near Branhholm.

A weatherboard house on Ruby Flat Road, with a shingle roof comprising two large rooms, was used by Sam as a camp and general store. It was located four kilometres from

the Branhholm main road. One room was used as a kitchen and sleeping quarters, while the other room comprised the store. The mine employees and Chinese purchased their provisions at the store, and opium was sold legally to them, as was the custom in those times. Some account books for the store survive and make fascinating reading; the earliest entry dated 11 September 1876, the purchase of 29 yards of canvas at 1s 8d; £2 8s 4d. This was no doubt for tents to house miners. Huts soon replaced the tents. Other goods and prices were as follows: Potatoes 1¼d per lb; tobacco 1s 6d per 4 oz; tea 2s 9d per lb; butter 1s 6d per lb; beef 6d per lb; flour 14s per 56lb; shirts 4s 6d; blankets 12s a pair. Timber and general hardware were also sold in large quantities, for example 223 feet of timber £1 15s 6d; wire nails 1s 2d per 2lb; picks 7s 6d; barrow wheel 10s 6d; sluice box 12s; and palings 7s 10d per 210. Sam became the Postmaster for Ruby Flat during 1880–1881.



Arba Tin Mine, near Branhholm, Tasmania
Hawkes family collection

In 1876 Sam had also discovered tin on Branhholm Creek. As a result, the Arba Association was subsequently formed in late 1877 and the Arba Tin Mining Co was in operation by early 1878 when Sam was engaged as the first mine manager. By 1884 the Arba Association included shareholders Sam Hawkes and legal secretary Torquil H URQUHART, Sam's stepfather-in-law. The Arba was to become a significant hydraulic sluicing operation located along the Ringarooma River, immediately north-east of Branhholm. The mine was famous for large-scale hydraulic sluicing to wash away thick layers of sediment and uncover the deep alluvial tin leads. The limited liability Arba TM Co. was formed in 1888. No public float was involved, all 48,000 (£1) shares being held by the remaining syndicate members who included Hawkes and Urquhart (8000 each).

Sam's 18-year tenure as mine manager finally ended when the Arba was eventually sold in 1896. During that period it paid large dividends. At the same time, he was manager of the Ruby Flat tin mine, with similar results. He then refocussed on his Ruby Flat claim for another 10 years, when it was then sold.

In his early days in Tasmania, Sam was not only successful in finding tin but also found a wife. On Boxing Day, 26 December 1877, he married Elizabeth RANKIN at the home of the bride's parents in Launceston. He was 32 years old and she 22. Elizabeth (1855–1925) was the daughter of the late George Rankin (c 1825–1857) and Caroline Urquhart, formerly Rankin, née BONYTHON (1830–1923) and stepdaughter of Captain Torquil Harold Urquhart (1824–1894).

Sam and Elizabeth made their first home in the Arba mine manager's house on the eastern outskirts of Branhholm on the main road, close to the Arbor Tin Mine. They were to have their first three children while in Branhholm. In 1882 he built Ellesmere House, a bay villa with dormer windows at the rear (still standing today) in what was then Ellesmere Village, about a mile north-east of Scottsdale. A further five children were born there between 1883 and 1890.

On 21 January 1880 three tin miners were brought up on remand from 14 January in the Police Court, Scottsdale and 'charged with having, during December last, feloniously stolen, taken, and carried away from the Standard Tin Mining claim at Ruby Flat, 2 tons of tin ore, the property of W.T. Pearce of Branhholm, valued at £100'. All four men were committed to Launceston Gaol. Sam had bought some tin ore at his store at Ruby Flat from some miners. The tin ore was alleged to have been stolen and thus he was implicated in the theft. He was charged with receiving the tin, knowing it to be stolen. He was reported on 7 April 1880 to be out on bail, so it appears that he had spent about 10 weeks in Launceston Gaol. A case was heard against the four accused at a criminal sitting in the Supreme Court in Launceston on 12 April. The following day a newspaper reported 'the prisoners were found guilty but recommended to mercy'. Three of the men were sentenced to six weeks to two months imprisonment. However, 'His Honour did not see anything in the evidence against Hawkes. There was nothing brought forward that was not consistent with Hawkes's innocence of a guilty knowledge of the stolen tin. After this expression of opinion on the part of His Honour, the Attorney-General entered a nolle

prosequi' (charges were dropped) 'against Hawkes, and he was accordingly discharged from custody'.

Despite this close brush with the law, Sam's future career in the public arena did not seem to be compromised.

He was a member of the Scottsdale Road Trust 1885–1887, which was subsequently merged with the Town Board (member 1901–1902), and later the Scottsdale Municipal Council (member 1907–1910) and served as the second Warden (mayor) of the Council 1908–1909. He was a foundation member of the North-Eastern Agricultural and Pastoral Society in 1881 and President in 1884–1886. He was also President of the Ringarooma Cuckoo Club and Musical Union.

His experience with the inadequacies of the mining legislation (there was a lot of legal wrangling over the disposal of mine tailings about this time) appears to have determined the timing in January 1885 of his nomination for the lower house seat of Ringarooma. He was duly elected a Member of the House of Assembly (MHA) of the Tasmanian Parliament on 26 July 1886 as the first member for Ringarooma, and two months later was reported to have 'launched out in the direction of assisting mining by moving for a select committee to inquire into and report upon the mining laws of the colony'. He was the MHA for Ringarooma until 22 May 1891 and was then re-elected until December 1893 when the Parliament was dissolved.

During 1888 he became a member of the Licensing Court for Ringarooma Municipality until 1893 and again in 1897. He was also the Chair of the Scottsdale Licensing Trust.

His involvement with liquor licensing brings forth a family anecdote. The story is told that one evening Sam was drinking with some cronies in a local hostelry after hours when the police raided the establishment. He quickly ran upstairs and concealed himself in the publican's quarters. The following day his fellow drinkers had to make a court appearance in front of the local magistrate—who just happened to be one Sam Hawkes, no less.

He was appointed a Justice of the Peace on 17 January 1887 and a Magistrate on 4 May 1895 and later as Territorial Justice. He held the position of Chairman of the Court and was Chairman of General Sessions for several years. He was appointed manager of Musselroe Tin Mining Company in September 1898.

He was appointed by the Crown to the Mount Cameron Water Race Board in 1889 and served until the end of 1913, when he was forced to resign due to ill health. He retired that year.

Family stories relate that he was a hard taskmaster. He would ride to work in a horse and cart but his four sons walked to his tin claims to labour there. Perhaps it is not surprising that they eventually travelled far and wide from Branhholm and Scottsdale. Harold and Fred went to northern Nigeria where they each managed tin mines in the 1910s, Hubert 'Huey' went to New Zealand as a high-country musterer then Salvation Army officer, Mervyn 'Bill' went to Melbourne to train racehorses with only Charlie remaining relatively close.

Sam was brought up as an Independent (Congregationalist) in Essex but as an adult he was a Presbyterian, probably influenced by his stepfather-in-law, Captain Torquil Harold Urquhart, a Scotsman.

He was a Freemason, a member of the Masonic Lodge. He was possibly encouraged to join by his grandfather-in-law, Alexander Rankin, who was a founding member of St John's Masonic Lodge, Launceston, in 1842 and was its first Worshipful Master. Sam was a foundation member of the St John's Lodge 346 I C (Irish Constitution). At the same time, he was a foundation member of Dorset 736 S C (Scottish Constitution) and a member of the Eastern Star Lodge I C Ringarooma. He was made a life member on 17 October 1928.

He took a trip to England in 1888 to see his aging parents, William and Eleanor, in Chelmsford, Essex (his father died in 1891 and his mother in 1894). A family story relates how, during this trip, the tin market slumped, and he had left no power of attorney to offload his shares. As a result, his personal wealth took a tumble and never recovered to its former level.

His latter days were spent in a wheelchair as a result of sciatica. His mental faculties were 'keen and alert' when interviewed on his 84th birthday in 1929. Sam died on 16 February 1937, aged 91. He was buried in Carr Villa Memorial Park, Launceston, with his wife, Elizabeth, who had predeceased him on 25 March 1925, aged 69. He was survived by six of their eight children.

In about 1975 a government housing project was developed on the edge of Scottsdale, just a few hundred metres from Ellesmere House, the old Hawkes homestead. Scottsdale Municipality named one of the streets Hawkes Place, in memory of Sam and his contribution to his local town.

The above story relates how a young Essex lad from an agricultural labouring background, and probably with no more than a primary school education, had the confidence to travel halfway around the world, firstly to gold mining in New Zealand, and later to tin mining in Australia. He progressed in the industry from miner to manager, director and shareholder and devoted 50 years of his life to it. In his private life he and his wife raised a large family which today has many descendants. He later took on public roles in local organisations and in local government, then represented his electorate in the Tasmanian House of Assembly. Later still, he held various judicial positions. He was an adventurer, explorer, miner, manager, entrepreneur, businessman, capitalist, politician and member of the local judiciary, among other things. Like many nineteenth-century British emigrants, he found opportunities that would not have materialised in his native land and took advantage of them.

Allan Hawkes
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The Dowgrays—A coal-mining family

John Dowgray

From Irish labourers to Scottish miners

The DOWGRAYS first became involved in the coal-mining industry with John DOUGERY, my 2x great-grandfather. John (1812–1872) was born in Donegal, Ireland. With his parents and siblings, he immigrated to Renfrew in Scotland about 1820, where the name changed over time to Dowgray. John worked first as a cotton hand-loom weaver, but in the 1840s hand-loom weaving was replaced by steam-powered looms in factories. John then moved down the Clyde River to Partick, where he worked as a pit-head man to miners. A pit-head man was not a miner but a clerk whose job it was to weigh and assess a miner's coal output per day and thus his wage. Miners were paid by the amount of coal hewed, not the hours worked.

The first true miner in the Dowgray family was John Dowgray's second son Andrew Dowgray (1845–1910). While still a teenager, Andrew left his home in Partick and moved further down the Clyde to Bellshill in Lanarkshire. Here he was known as Andrew GRAY, a name he mostly used for the next 40 years. In Bellshill he married Jane/Jeannie LAIRD. The Laird family were originally from Larbet, Stirlingshire. Larbet was an old coal and iron ore mining town, and the Laids had been coal and iron ore miners for generations. Andrew joined his Laird in-laws down the mine.

Andrew Gray aka Andrew Dowgray

Andrew worked as a coal miner all his life. However, according to family tradition, he was something of a dreamer, always searching for a better mine and moving every one to two years, dragging his family with him. Andrew and Jeannie had 10 children, nine of whom survived to adulthood. Andrew worked in the coalfields of Central Scotland, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, and Midlothian and down into north-east England in County Durham. His workplaces can be traced through the birth registrations of his

successive children. Most were registered under the name Gray, although two were registered as Dowgray. The name Dowgray was finally adopted in 1895. The family was kept together by their formidable mother, Jeannie, and the close-knit nature of mining communities. All the surviving sons, Joseph, John, Robert, William and Andrew, became coal miners. Joseph and William set up independent lives in Lanarkshire and Durham, marrying into local families there. John, Robert and Andrew remained with their parents. Their sisters, Isabella, Janet, and Jeannie, all married coal miners but Margaret married a widowed insurance agent.

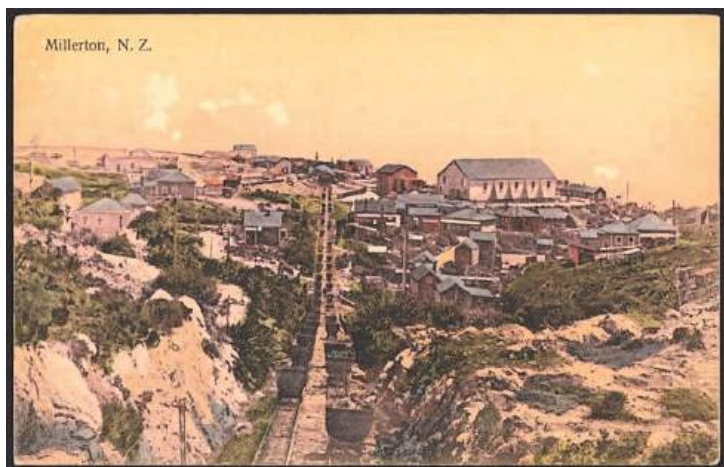
Father Andrew continued his wandering. In 1903, in company with other miners, he travelled to Nova Scotia in Canada to check out a coal mine there. However, it was not to their liking, so they all returned to Scotland. In 1904 Andrew tried again. This time he was accompanied by his youngest son, Andrew, and they came to New Zealand. Their destination was the Millerton Mine above Granity on the West Coast. This time they stayed. Andrew was now nearly 60 and his mining days were nearly over. Jeannie, with their son Robert, travelled to Granity in 1905 and John Dowgray and his family arrived in 1907.

Millerton Mine

By 1908 Andrew, John, Robert and Andrew Jnr were all working in the Millerton Mine and living together in Granity. Mining in the Millerton Mine was a new experience for the Dowgrays. First, they did not go 'down the mine' but 'up the mine'. The coal was located on a high plateau 300 to 600 metres above Granity. Secondly, mine shafts were not vertical but horizontal as the miners burrowed into the exposed coal seam. The coal was then transferred to the rail hub at Granity via an ingenious ropeway, the famous incline. Heavy-laden coal tubs used gravity to go to the coast, their weight pulling up the empty tubs, ready to be reloaded. There were two inclines, one for Millerton and one for the Denniston Mine. Both brought coal down to Granity. The Dowgray men actually used the incline to travel up and down to work each day. There was no road access for many years, so the Millerton residents also travelled to and from Granity using the incline.

The Millerton Mine was rich in bituminous coal, ideal for stoking steam engines. Its seams were thick as well, up to 10 metres high. Nevertheless, it was a difficult and dangerous mine. The drifts were heavily fractured with numerous fissures and a multitude of entrances and roadways. The mine was prone to fires which could not be extinguished but simply left to burn. It was also a wet mine with the high rainfall and numerous cracks and crevices. This meant the miners were usually working in water. At times the water and the fires created a steamy atmosphere for the working miner. Roof falls were a constant danger as well as poisonous gas.

When John Dowgray arrived at Millerton in 1907, miners were working three shifts a day of seven hours duration at the coal face. This did not include the time to reach the coal face from the mine head. A 20-minute break was allowed



G Parkhouse (Firm, Westport): Millerton, N.Z. New Zealand postcard, issued by G Parkhouse, Westport. Phototyped in Saxony [ca 1910]. [Postcards of the Westport and Buller area, collected by William Robert Jones. 1900–1970s.] Ref: Eph-A-POSTCARDS-Jones-03. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. natlib.govt.nz/records/22300668

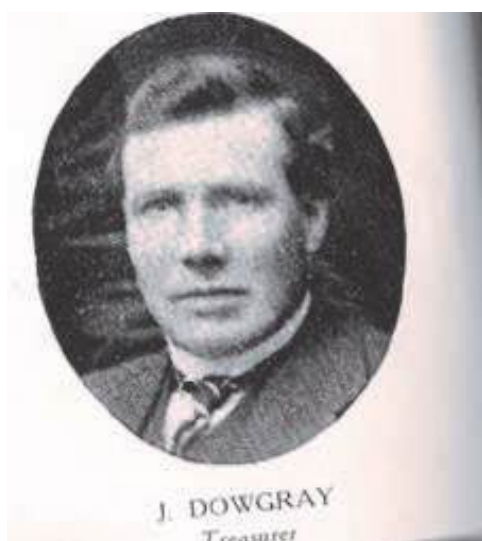
for a meal, and miners worked six days per week. All coal was hewed by hand and hewers were paid 24 to 35 pence per ton. Other workers were paid less according to age, experience and duties. The hewers were thus the elite workers. The Westport Coal Company, owners of the Millerton Mine, paid for tools and all workers were obliged to join the local Miners' Union.

John Dowgray 1873–1950

John Dowgray joined his father and brothers down the mine in Newbattle, Midlothian, Scotland, when he was 14 years, the legal age. He began as a tributer's boy, an informal apprenticeship to his father, and received a percentage of the full miner's wage, a half ben or a three-quarter ben. As he matured, growing stronger and more experienced, he worked his way from trapper who operated the mine's ventilation system, to putter who pushed the coal tubs. More skilled jobs included roadmen who cleared the roadways in the mine of the loose material on the floor, brusher who blasted unstable roofs with dynamite to remove possible rock falls, inspectors of pit props who inspected and replaced pit props as necessary, belt and pulley workers and pit pony drivers who hauled the tubs of coal to the mine shaft.

John was more ambitious than his father, acquiring more formal qualifications by attending night-school classes at Coatbridge College in Lanarkshire. This was a recently founded technical institute, the first of its kind in Scotland, providing professional qualifications in heavy industry and mining. The college based its lectures around the needs of the working man, providing day and evening classes.

By 1895 John had moved to Seaham in County Durham where he married Elspeth SEY, a local girl. John worked in the Nicky Nack, the Seaham Colliery, one of the largest up-to-date collieries in Great Britain. This colliery had five seams and extended under the North Sea, employing several thousand miners. The Seaham Miners' Union and the owner, the Marquis of Londonderry, had created a model mining community, with a library, meeting hall, regular newspapers and a near-free health service for miners and their families.



John Dowgray as Treasurer of the New Zealand Federation of Labour c 1912

In 1900 John and Elspeth Dowgray moved back to Scotland, settling in Burnbank, near Hamilton in Lanarkshire. They had three daughters, Phyllis (Lillian), Flora and Elspeth (Elsie), and a son Andrew. John worked at Earnock Mine, again one of the most up-to-date mines in Britain with electricity below. It was at Earnock Mine that John Dowgray began his parallel career in mining, as a miner's advocate and political activist. He was the secretary of the Earnock Miners' Union and a founding member of the Independent Labour Party. He was also active in local politics and was elected to the Hamilton Education Board. However, in 1907, John and family left Scotland to join the Dowgray family already in New Zealand. John had been involved in an ill-judged slander case and faced considerable legal costs.

John joined his father and brothers at Millerton Mine and worked there for the next 30 years, retiring in 1937 as the underground manager for the Westport Coal Company. During those 30 years John worked as a miner, becoming a deputy (underground foreman), an overviewer (underground manager) and acted as mine manager.

From 1908 to 1917 John was a prominent mining unionist. He was President of the Millerton Miners' Union and a Red Fedder, an executive member and treasurer of the New Zealand Federation of Labour, the so-called Red Feds. He was actively involved in the great 1913 General Strike, when members of the Federation of Labour went on strike throughout New Zealand, stopping mining, waterfront labour, railways and many other trades, in conflict with the Reform Government led by William Ferguson MASSEY. Following the failure of the General Strike and thus the Federation of Labour, John Dowgray and Robert SEMPLE formed a new union, the New Zealand Federation of Miners.

During WWI the New Zealand Federation of Miners campaigned against the conscription of miners. John Dowgray was one of the eight signatories in a public letter expressing their opposition on the grounds that coal mining was experiencing severe labour shortages, reduced wages and deteriorating working conditions. Differences arose between John and other members of the Federation during 1916 and 1917. John favoured an approach to individual coal companies to raise wages and improve working conditions while other members advocated unofficial industrial warfare using wild-cat strikes and go-slows. John secured an unofficial agreement with the government which modified the miners' conscription terms, but the agreement broke down when further wild-cat strikes took place. The government reacted with severe punitive measures and John Dowgray resigned from the New Zealand Federation of Miners and all union activity in May 1917.

John Dowgray then joined the Westport Coal Company and worked for them until 1937. In that year he resigned and became a director of the Bank of New Zealand as an appointee of the first Labour government. John played important roles in the wider coal industry. He served on three Royal Commissions into Mining in 1912, 1914 and 1939, under Liberal, Reform and Labour governments. During WWII he served as the independent Chairman of the United Mine Workers and Coal Owners, and as the Industrial Conciliator. He chaired the Mines Council between

1945 and 1947. John Dowgray served the coal industry all his life.

An end to coal mining in the Dowgray family

John and Elspeth Dowgray's three daughters all married coal miners, who worked in the Buller, Grey, Waikato and Otago fields. Their only son, Andrew, did not go down the mine but became a school teacher, going up the incline in the empty coal tubs to teach at Millerton School. Two of John's brothers, Joseph and Robert Dowgray, died as young men probably as the result of working underground. John's oldest sister, Isabella Dowgray later PETRIE, after being widowed in Scotland, went with her children to Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, Canada, in 1906. On 19 June 1914 the Hillcrest Mine, near Crowsnest Pass, exploded, killing 189 miners and leaving 90 women widowed and hundreds of children fatherless. Among the dead were three of Isabella Dowgray Petrie's sons, Alexander, James and Robert. Alexander was only 17 years old and in his first weeks of work as a miner. Another brother, Andrew Petrie, was off shift that morning and so survived. It was the worst disaster in Canadian mining history.

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John and Elspeth Dowgray, in the garden of their home in Granity, with their family c 1930.

Back left to right: Elsie Blythe, Lillian Webster, Flora Barker.

Front left to right: John Dowgray, Elspeth Dowgray née Sey, Andrew Dowgray.

Dowgray Family photo.



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Richard Chard: Otago gold miner cum market gardener and farmer

Allan Hawkes

The English origins of my great-grandfather (father of my paternal grandmother), Richard CHARD, are not precisely known. The names of his parents are not known, although his father was recorded as James, a cooper by occupation, on Richard's death certificate. What is known is that he was born in Dorset about 1842. Chard is an old West Country surname. He is said to have arrived in New Zealand as a lad of 14 (c 1856), and after farming in Canterbury, he came to the Dunstan goldfield for the gold rush in 1862 when he was about 20. The Dunstan extended along the Molyneux (Clutha) River and the Manuhirikiha Valley and was discovered by HARTLEY and REILLY and made public on 16 August 1862 when they deposited 87 pounds (1044 ounces or nearly 40 kilograms) of gold in Dunedin. This initial area of discovery was in the Dunstan Gorge, downriver from Cromwell. This triggered the Dunstan Gold Rush and within weeks, thousands of miners had swarmed into the area. The field was officially declared and opened on 23 September 1862.

No recording of Richard has been found from 1862 until 1871, but it is assumed he was gold mining during this time. In that year he was registered with an address 'West Bank, Molyneux', Dunstan Electorate, as he was for 1872, 1873–1874 and 1875–1876. On 8 May 1871 he and two others had applied to the Warden's Court, Clyde (before Mr Warden PIKE—Vincent PYKE was a well-known goldfields administrator and politician) for an extended claim of two acres at Burke's Point, west bank of the Molyneux. Burke's Point was a prominent gold mining location on the Molyneux River. It was situated in the lower Cromwell Gorge, just

upstream from the town of Clyde, so it would have been within the Dunstan Goldfield. From 1871, electoral rolls and notices in Otago newspapers sourced through Papers Past have helped fill in the gaps. He was still on the west bank of the Molyneux in 1875–1876 but was registered in both the Dunstan and Wakatipu electorates, with his address for the latter given as Queenstown. The 1876–1877 Dunstan roll recorded: 'household; West Bank Molyneux, wood and iron house'. Again, he was also recorded in the Wakatipu electorate this year with 'freehold; Queenstown, section 4, block 43'. It seems he had become a property owner. On 11 October 1877 he had applied to the Warden's Court, Arrowtown 'for a residence area on the southern side of the Kawarau adjoining Mr OWEN's paddock'. This was granted. Sometime shortly after this, he built a cottage there which became the family home.

Whenever he was in Queenstown on business, Richard would stop for a meal at a particular hotel, and it was there that he met his future wife, Miss Emily GREEN of Queenstown. She was born on 1 November 1857 at Woodstock, Oxfordshire, the location of the Churchills' and Dukes of Marlborough's Blenheim Palace. Emily was the third daughter and third child of Richard Green (c 1832–1908) and Harriet(t) née GARD(I)NER (c 1831–1905). They had 10 children, eight of whom had emigrated with them, embarking at Greenock, Scotland on 31 October 1874 on the *Wild Deer* and arriving at Dunedin on 20 January 1875. The New Zealand Government paid the fares of £123 5s. This couple were glovers by occupation and three of their daughters, including Emily, were recorded in censuses as 'gloveresses'. Woodstock was known as a leather glove-making centre where it was a cottage industry.

Richard Chard and Emily Green were married at Richard Green's cottage, Shotover Street, Queenstown, on 16 July 1877 in a Presbyterian ceremony. Richard was 35 years old, a miner, Emily 20, a domestic servant. R Green gave consent as his daughter was under 21.

By 1880 the couple had built a cottage on the old coach road from Cromwell to Queenstown on a river terrace on the south side of the Kawarau Gorge, near where the Arrow and Kawarau Rivers meet. This section of the road then became the dead-end Chard Road when the Kawarau Gorge Suspension Bridge opened on 30 December 1880 and the main road diverted to the northern side of the river. According to *Golden Days of Lake County*, Emily 'was the first woman to walk over the Kawarau Bridge soon after it was built, some planks being laid to walk on'. (This sounds like it occurred before construction was complete.) 'On one occasion when she was crossing the river in a chair with her two young children, a strong wind tangled the ropes when the chair was above the middle of the river' (about 42 metres up) 'and they could move neither backwards nor forwards. Mrs Chard spent some anxious minutes keeping the children pacified while the workmen on the bridge rescued them.' The children were her eldest two, Minnie



Emily and Richard Chard with daughter Ivy, c 1895
Hawkes family collection

(born 1878), and Emily, my grandmother (born 1879). The bridge was replaced in 1963 and has since been used by A J Hackett as the world's first commercial bungy jumping site.

The Chards had started with a one-acre strip of land, just enough for a vegetable plot and an orchard. Richard milked two or three cows and kept a few hens. Fresh produce was in great demand, and Richard saw an opportunity to supply miners to supplement his mining activities. He delivered the produce by horse and cart throughout the district and over the Crown Range to Cardrona. Anyone who has driven on the winding, steep climb up to the 1076-metre summit on the Crown Range can only imagine how a horse and cart would get up this road. There was plenty of competition and Richard had to make early starts to compete with the Chinese also supplying vegetables to the miners.

Richard and Emily ultimately had 10 children, seven living to adulthood: Rosina Minnie 'Minnie' (Mrs BELL) (1878–1962); Emily (Mrs HAWKES) (1879–1967); Albert Richard (1881–1902); Harry (1884–1945); Isabella Harriet 'Essie' (Mrs RASMUSSEN) (1886–1957); Maud (1888–1894); Ivy (Mrs SMITH) (1890–1936); Richard James (1894–1895); Frederick William 'Fred' (1896–1979); and Mary (1900–1900).

Richard's mining activity continued. An extended claim and water race was granted by the Warden's Court on 11 September 1879. He was recorded in both Dunstan and Wakatipu electorates again in 1878–1879. In the 1884, 1887 and 1890 electoral rolls he was a miner, a resident of Gibbston. This small settlement is in the Kawarau Gorge, between Queenstown and Cromwell, six kilometres downriver from the Chard cottage.

Richard published a notice in the *New Zealand Gazette* on 20 August 1885 notifying the Mining Registrar of Arrow of his intention to bring under a section of The Mines Act, 1877 all his water races with their tributaries, 'commencing at a point in Lang's Creek south side of the Kawarau River, and terminating on the flat below the Arrow Bluff' (later Few's Bluff, skirted by Chard Road). 'The length of such race is seven miles, the breadth 2 feet 6 inches, the depth 3 feet, the capacity 8 Government-heads of water.' This was obviously a significant structure. It is assumed that he was not only supplying water to his own claims but may have been supplying others as well. On several occasions between 1895 and 1899 he had applied to the Warden's Court, Arrowtown for protection of water races.

On 11 October 1889 he and T CRAIG, Arrow River, applied to the Lake District Council for 'permission to sluice away roadway immediately above their claim, and offering to provide another suitable track in its place'. The result of this request is not known but it is to be assumed that Chard and Craig were into good 'pay dirt' and were reluctant to cease their sluicing.

On 25 June 1892 he applied to the Warden's Court, Arrowtown for a licence to occupy 10 acres of Crown land at Sandhills, Kawarau River for agricultural purposes. He said he had marked out the boundaries of this as follows: 'Bounded on the north by the Kawarau River, 10 chains; on the south by Crown Lands, 10 chains; on the east by Nugget Creek, 10 chains: on the west by Crown Lands, 10 chains.' He signed the application 'Richard Chard, Sandhills,

Kawarau River', so this was at or adjacent to his residence. However, on 15 September he applied to have the occupation licence withdrawn and applied for 30 acres. This was granted for 10 years at 1s per acre per annum. It seems that he was encouraged by the granting of 10 acres and decided to up his bid. Farming was becoming a more important aspect of his work activities. As *A History of Goldmining in New Zealand* noted: 'The gold rushes brought much of the small farmer class to New Zealand. After the era of the rushes the settlement of the alluvial digger on the land was a continuing process...'

In 1899 there was interest in dredging in the Kawarau Gorge. On 7 July 1899, the *Evening Star* published the prospectus of the Kia-Ora Gold Dredging Company Limited, raising capital of £7500. Reports were solicited on the merits of the claim from those who had some experience of it. One of these was from Richard Chard: 'With regards to your claim on the Kawarau River: Over 20 years ago I was working on a spoon dredge, near the Horseshoe Bend, and lower down the river, where this claim is situated, and we were getting gold that returned us about 10s per man per day, but we could only dredge to a depth of six foot and treat about 80 tons of stuff per week. Other than this I do not think this claim has been worked, and I am satisfied that from the slight test we gave it, and from the richness of the banks, that an up-to-date dredge placed there to work the ground would get big returns of gold.' The spoon dredge was a forerunner of the much more effective bucket dredge.

On 10 February 1900, the *Otago Daily Times* published the prospectus of the McBride's Freehold Company Limited, raising capital of £8000. It had a claim at the junction of the Shotover and Kawarau Rivers. Again, a report was sought from Richard Chard: 'Regarding your claim, I was well acquainted with many who were working in close proximity to your ground, and they got fair gold. I am of opinion that the lead of gold runs through your property, and I do not see why your ground should not pay well for dredging. I, with another party, worked a spoon dredge opposite your ground. We made from 8s to 10s per day by that very slow process. The tributaries of the Horseshoe Bend did very well by dredging near your claim.' This would have been directly across the Kawarau River from the Chard homestead at Sandhills, Chard Road.

In September 1902 Richard made an application for an occupation lease of 30 acres, at a rental of 8d an acre and it was granted by 6 January 1903. This was assumedly a renewal of the lease that was granted in 1892 for 10 years. This was very timely because, on 11 January, he died at his home, aged 60, the victim of 'that fell disease cancer'. He was buried in the Arrowtown Cemetery in an unmarked grave. On 26 February, the trustees of his estate had applied to the Land Board to have the lease transferred to his wife, Emily Chard, and this was approved. On 24 October 1903 the executors of Richard's will, Emily and one other, applied to the Warden's Court, Arrowtown to be registered as owners of his mining privileges and this was approved. These were obviously of some value to his widow.

Richard had made his will on 13 December 1902, knowing he had a short time to live, and it was probated on 22

February 1903. An Inventory of his real and personal property was submitted by the executors on 14 March and makes interesting reading. It is a detailed list of items in the house and associated with the farm. 'Furniture, goods and effects and stock and chattels' were valued at £131 14s. The most valuable items were a bay mare, £30; two milking cows at £6 each, £12; a cultivator, £16; and a reaper and binder, £10. The total house contents were valued at £30 14s. The occupation lease of 30 acres that Richard had renewed just before his death was valued at £58 and the water race that he had notified the Mining Registrar about in August 1885 was worth £100.

Richard's obituary stated that he 'followed mining at Kawarau—not without success—for a long number of years, lately took to gardening, in which capacity he was a well-known and welcome feature in Arrowtown, appearing with his cart as regularly as Saturday came round. Deceased was of a quiet, kindly, and most obliging disposition. He also displayed great energy and enterprise, having started the first dredging operations in the Upper Kawarau, about 26 or 27 years ago, with a spoon dredge, which, however, was not successful enough to keep going.' This dredge, used in the mid-1870s, must have been one of the first in the Kawarau Gorge.

Emily died at Lake County Hospital on 22 November 1922, aged 65. She was buried with her husband in the Arrowtown Cemetery, her grave unmarked. Her obituary recorded: 'Mrs Chard was one of the best known residents of Gibbston, having lived there the whole of her married life. She was a woman of happy and kindly disposition...' Her estate was valued at a mere £24 16s 6d. It is interesting to note that Emily was on the first electoral roll in New Zealand that included women (1893).

Richard and Emily's second son, Harry, took over management of the farm and helped Emily to run it until he joined the Salvation Army in 1917. His young brother, Fred, then took over, continued with the market garden but concentrated on dairying, with the herd eventually increasing to 26. This was a 30-acre dairy farm surrounded by dry sheep country. Fred, his wife Mary, and their son Eric ran the farm until 1978, a family occupancy of 100



**Fred Chard and sisters Emily Hawkes, Essie Rasmussen and Minnie Bell, at Chard cottage, Kawarau Gorge, 1940
Hawkes family collection**

years. The Chard cottage was demolished in 1982, but I did get to see it when my father and I met Fred and Eric there in 1974.

The farm was hardly a bonanza—it never earned more than \$1000 a year and was never freeholded, but the family said they were happy there. The property became the Chard Farm Winery in 1987, so the family's name has been perpetuated. There is some irony here—the later generations were Salvationists and thus teetotallers. And no, the chardonnay produced there has not been named after the family!

Although none of Richard's children carried on with gold mining, two grandsons did. During the Depression in 1932, James and Richard Bell (sons of Minnie Bell, née Chard), along with W KILGOUR (Minnie's son-in-law) and the HOOPER brothers, tunnelled under the sandstone bluff at Scotland Point on the Kawarau near Bannockburn to make a rich strike yielding an ounce of gold to the dish. On one occasion 60 oz were won in three days and gold averaging 10 oz to the dish was washed up; in three dishes 35 oz were produced. The Bell-Hooper Company won over 1000 oz of gold within nine months. They then shrewdly sold out for a handsome £18,000 each and the gold ran out shortly afterwards.

The foregoing story is of one family's involvement in the gold mining industry, which was a significant part of the nineteenth-century economic development of New Zealand. It did not make them a fortune (excepting the grandsons) but it did provide them with a very modest income.

Allan Hawkes

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George Thomas Shann—A pillar of the community

Lianne Sloan

My 2x great-grandfather, George Thomas SHANN, has no known birth entry in the England and Wales Birth Indexes. However, a baptism entry shows Thomas Shann, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Shann, was baptised on 29 May 1842 at Ripon, Yorkshire. The family were living at Little Harris, Ripon, and his father was a labourer. As George was known to have been born in 1842, it is probably him and an additional Christian name was added after the baptism.

As Thomas Shann and Elizabeth GILL were married on 26 December 1841 at Ripon Cathedral, Ripon, it appears he was on his way, and no doubt the reason they had to marry quickly. Thomas' father was Christopher Shann and he was a labourer, while Elizabeth's father was George Gill, a millwright.

In 1851 George Shann was aged nine, a scholar, born in Ripon and was living with his family at Kirkgate, Ripon. His father was a farm labourer. By 1861 George was recorded as age 18 and was living with Charles RAYNOR and his wife Sarah at Coxhoe West Terrace, Comforth, Durham. George and Charles were both coal labourers. George was recorded as being a nephew and it appears it was Sarah who was his

aunt, as she was born in Ripon; there is a Sarah Gill, daughter of George Gill, born in 1827 which matches her age in the 1861 census. George obviously thought enough of Sarah's husband Charles, however, to later name his oldest son Charles Raynor Shann.

George Thomas Shann, a bachelor aged 27, married Evelina MUSCHAMP, a spinster aged 24 on 26 February 1871 at St Saviour's Church, York, Yorkshire. George was a labourer. His father was recorded as Thomas Shann, a labourer, and Evelina's father was recorded as Richard Muschamp, a tailor. The witnesses were David Shann and Ann Muschamp. Evelina's mother was Mary Ann Gill (known as Ann) and her father was George Gill, millwright, so George and Evelina were cousins. In 1997 I visited St Saviour's Church in York at St Savioursgate, which was very close to the Shambles. It became redundant in 1954 and is now used by the York Archaeological Trust.

At the time of the 1871 census, George and Evelina were visiting his uncle David at 10 Peasholme Green, St Saviour, Yorkshire. George was aged 28 and was a locomotive fireman by this stage.

Their first two children were born in England. Annie Elizabeth Shann was born on 24 May 1872 at Mt Ephraim, Bishophill Jnr, York, and was baptised a month later at St Peter's Church in Leeds where the Muschamp family lived. George was recorded as a stoker at this point. In December 1897 she married George VAUGHAN at All Saint's Church, Methven, New Zealand.

Charles Raynor Shann was born on 19 October 1873 at Mt Ephraim, Bishophill Jnr, York, and was baptised two months later at St Peter's Church in Leeds. George was still a stoker. Charles married twice—firstly to Julia LANGDON in January 1904 at St Saviour's Church, Sydenham, Christchurch, and then following her death in March 1914, he married a widow, Nellie SHEPPARD in October 1914 at Holy Trinity, Avonside, Christchurch. The second marriage ended in divorce in 1937.

But why did the family move to Christchurch and when? Evelina's older brother, George Barker Muschamp, with his wife and three of his children, had emigrated on the *Cathcart* arriving in Lyttelton in August 1874 as Government immigrants. He had skills that no doubt were very much needed as he was a stonemason. In time he worked on a number of well-known buildings including the Christchurch Cathedral (where he was the clerk of works when the steeple came down again after an earthquake in 1901) and the Press building in Christchurch. Despite a rather unsettling voyage out to New Zealand when four of the crew staged a mutiny and shots were fired, resulting in prison sentences at the end of the voyage, George must have encouraged his parents and siblings to come out to New Zealand as well.

Richard and Mary Ann (Ann) Muschamp had 12 children, with only one, George de Castino Muschamp, dying in



George Thomas Shann
Sloan family collection

infancy in 1857. With George already in New Zealand, the family must have discussed whether they should move out there to join him and his family. All of them chose to do so, with the exception of one. Roderick Muschamp was by this time already married and his wife Rebecca (née DANCE) did not want to go. Roderick is believed to have become quite distraught as all his immediate family departed on the train on the first part of their journey to the other side of the world.

George and Evelina chose to come and travelled with Anne and Charles on the *Star of China* in 1875, along with Evelina's parents, most of her siblings and some nieces and nephews. They were assisted immigrants travelling to Canterbury. It was a good voyage with only one death recorded.

George was listed as being a fireman when he came to New Zealand. He was aged 31, Evelina was 24, Annie was aged three and Charles was two. George went to work for New Zealand Railways shortly after arriving in New Zealand.

George was recorded as being a porter when their next child, Llewellyn Sibley Shann (known as Sibley), was born on 13 January 1877 in Ashburton, Canterbury. Sibley was baptised a month later at St Stephen's Anglican Church, Ashburton. Sadly, Sibley died aged two in Ashburton.

On 3 December 1878 on page 2 of the *Evening Echo* and *Ashburton Herald* the following was published:

THISTLE LODGE, No. 672, SC: Installation of Officers: The annual installation of officers for this Lodge took place last evening at 8 o'clock in the new Templar hall, where the regular meetings are now held, a very comfortable building, and well adapted for masonic purposes. There was a very fair attendance, and several representatives from other lodges were in attendance. The Lodge having been opened in due form by the RVM Bro. Rev. James Hill, DM from Lyttelton, acting as Installing Master, commenced the ceremony by installing Bro. Joseph Fletcher, PM as Right Worshipful Master of this Lodge for the ensuing 12 months. This was the most important part of the proceedings and was conducted in a most impressive and able manner by the Installing Master, the musical part of the ceremony by Bro. H. J. Weeks. Afterwards the following were invested with the jewels of their respective offices with the usual lectures: Bro. G. St Hill, DM; Bro. Garnett, Secretary; Bro. Chapman, JD; Bro. T. Smith, JG; Bro. Hurst, SW; Bro. Quill, Treasurer; Bro. Nelson, SD; Bro. Hayden, JW; Bro. G. Shann, Tyler; Stewards Bros McFarlane and Ewen. Bro. R. Cullen, DM is to be installed at a future meeting also Bro. H. A. Gates, organist. The usual honours having been given to the officers elected by the brethren, with the lectures by the Installing Master the Lodge closed and the Brethren proceeded to the Banquet.

Interestingly, on the same page was an article saying the new court at the Templar Hall was used for the first time as the Magistrate's Courthouse on 3 December 1878, with the voting papers and Lodge furniture still in place. The only prisoner of the day, a Mr Pat Dunn, was put in place. With the emblems of the Templar Order glaring at him in bright yellow letters on a black background, Mr Pat Dunn was

sentenced to two months' imprisonment for drunkenness and blackguardism.

In the *Evening Echo* and *Ashburton Herald* an article on page 2 on 28 January 1879 mentioned George:

POLICE COURT: Before the Mayor and Mr James Campbell today, Patrick Dunn was charged with being drunk and disorderly, assaulting the police in the execution of their duty, with destruction of property, and with using obscene language in the public streets. The sergeant proved several previous convictions against Dunn, and said he was a very foul mouthed fellow. Constable Draper and Constable Bullen testified to the assault charged against prisoner while being arrested to his drunkenness and obscenity and the violence he used towards them. Mr James Wilkie said he had called the constable's attention to Dunn, who on the street in front of the Post Office was using the most foul language possible while three young ladies were in hearing. He further stated that he had some time ago given Dunn work, but the other men had refused to work alongside prisoner because of his foul talk. Mr George Shann, who had assisted in the arrest, said prisoner kicked him twice. The Bench considering that accused was an incorrigible vagabond and had only recently been released from a term of 3 months imprisonment, sentenced Dunn to 2 months in gaol with muscular exercise.

In 2000 I wrote to the Grand Lodge of New Zealand Freemasons who advised that George had become a member in 1878 when the Lodge operated under the Grand Lodge of Scotland as Thistle Lodge No. 627. He resigned in 1899. At some point he became a member of the Star of Ashburton Lodge and also the Methven Masonic Lodge No. 51 and notices published by both Lodges when George died indicated he was still currently a member of both groups in 1913.

Grand Lodge of New Zealand Freemasons indicated that the Grand Lodge of New Zealand was not formed until 1890. The large number of Lodges already in existence were affiliated to the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland and Ireland until the new sovereign body in New Zealand was formed. They advised each Lodge had individual registers, so it was not easy to look up the old records.

The Lodges started in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for stonemasons and as my 6x great-grandfather, John Muschamp, and his extended family were well known for their stonemasonry work throughout England and beyond, it is highly probable there were a number of them who belonged to the original Lodges. John was the master mason at Harewood House on the outskirts of Leeds when it was first built. Capability BROWN did the grounds, CHIPPENDALE did the wooden drapes and, no doubt, furnishings and TURNER (the painter) was sponsored by the LASCELLES family who owned the house, so he spent a lot of time there.

By the time the Lodges were set up in New Zealand they were open to non-stonemasons. Freemason clubs, as the Lodges are now known, are quite different and ultimately are social and philanthropic groups like the Lions Clubs and Rotary Clubs that exist today. The first Rotary Club was established in New Zealand in 1921 and the first Lions Club was established in New Zealand in 1955, so for a long time

Lodges were the clubs to join if you were community-minded. Having been a member of the Lions Clubs International, first as a Leo for nine years and then as a Lion for 34 years, I know Freemasons, Lions and Rotarians all do great work in our local and more wider communities, donate to great causes and are a great way to meet people. Often all three groups provide funding as well as volunteer time for the same organisations, e.g. Camp Quality (a camp for children living with cancer) and Hospice.

There obviously was not a need even back in George's time to have an occupation deemed to be suitable to be a Lodge member as George was a railway porter or railway labourer. He was clearly respectable and was community-minded and cared about his fellow man.

From Papers Past and seeing articles about various Lodges, it is clear from snippets that were revealed, that they regularly checked on members who were unwell and when their members died notices were quickly published to let them know about the funerals or special gatherings to remember their members who had passed. There were also social evenings, some quite large, especially Masonic balls, when visiting Lodge members would travel to visit other Lodges and participate in a fun evening. There were two funeral notices from the UAO (United Ancient Order) Druids—Star of Ashburton Lodge and Methven Masonic Lodge No. 51, which accompanied the official funeral notice for George's funeral. Members were requested to attend the funeral. Methven Masonic Lodge No. 51 members were encouraged to wear white gloves and ties.

The *Ashburton Herald* published an article on 11 March 1879 about a railway collision at Ashburton. The 10.45am express train from Christchurch arrived at the Ashburton Station and collided with a goods train. Luckily there was no loss of life nor personal injury to anyone, although a considerable amount of damage to rolling stock was sustained. The Yankee engine of the express, the 'Washington', had the whole of her fore-carriage smashed, the cases of her cylinder broken and the engine generally disabled. The goods engine's cow catcher was destroyed otherwise her damage was light.

On 17 April 1879 the *Ashburton Guardian* published a follow-up:

COURT: The case against Bell, the lately assistant shunter at the Ashburton Station, was then taken up, and the Station Master, the foreman shunter (G. Shann), the lampman (James Allan), the drivers of the goods and express trains on the 11th March when the accident occurred were all examined to show that the points were in charge of Bell on the day in question, and that through his fault in not attending to them the accident occurred.

While found guilty of culpable negligence in leaving the points open and so causing the accident, Bell had been incarcerated in prison for six days and, as the most serious charge was withdrawn at the last moment, he was released and had to pay a fine of only £1.

On 25 April 1879 another article was published in the *Ashburton Herald*:

James Austin was accused of being drunk at the Railway Station, and with obstructing the railway servants. Geo.

Shann testified to prisoner's unruly conduct, and an assault committed upon witness, whereby witness's clothing was considerably damaged. Witness gave prisoner into custody. He was very violent. The station-master gave similar evidence, adding that the instructions to railway officials were to prevent drunken men from getting on the train. The Bench severely reprimanded prisoner, and fined him £2 for drunkenness, and £2 for assault, with the alternative of 9 days' imprisonment; also to pay 5s, damage to the railway officer's clothing.

Daughter Sibylla Rosa Shann was born on 3 September 1881 in Ashburton and baptised a month later at St Stephen's Anglican Church, Ashburton. George was recorded as a labourer (undoubtedly for the Railway still). Sibylla married George Rowe FITTOCK on 24 December 1912 at All Saints Church, Methven.

A return of the freeholders of New Zealand in October 1882 recorded George Shann, Labourer of Ashburton, as having land worth £130 in Ashburton Borough.

Their next child, Gilbert George Shann, was born on 19 October 1883 at Ashburton and in December 1883 he was baptised at St Stephen's Anglican Church, Ashburton. Father George was recorded as a labourer. Gilbert George, also known as George, went on to marry Ada STEVENS in March 1911 at the Primitive Methodist Church, Porirua, Wellington.

By 1885 the family moved to Methven and George was Chairman of the Methven School and is mentioned in several newspaper articles in the *Star* including one under the heading 'School Committees' dated 16 February 1886 which included this excerpt:

A special meeting of this Committee was held on Saturday evening; present—Messrs George Shann (Chairman), J. Hibbs, D. Quinn, N. Duff, J. Gilchrist, R. Patton and J. C. McWilliam. The Chairman briefly explained that the meeting was convened to recommend a successor to the present master, Mr W. N. Seay, and to receive the master's last monthly report.

Methven School celebrated its 65 years anniversary in March 1947. *Ashburton Guardian* published a lengthy article on 29 March 1947 which reveals the original building was opened on 7 February 1882 and was destroyed by fire around 1915. The school was opened in Jackson Street, next to where the Presbyterian Church now stands. In 1885



Methven town 1912—George Shann first house on left

Mr G Shann was chairman of the school committee. He was also chairman in 1900 and for the period 1904–1910. Unfortunately, when the fire happened in 1915, many of the school records were destroyed.

My great-grandmother, Laura Evelina Shann, was born on 16 April 1886 at Methven and baptised three months later at St Stephen's Anglican Church in Ashburton. Her father was a platelayer by this point. My great-grandmother Laura married James Bateman Fittock on 20 December 1911 at All Saints Church, Methven. James and his brother, George, therefore married two of George and Evelina's daughters, a year apart.

Their son, Fred Victor Shann, was born on 8 March 1888 in Methven. He married Matilda STOKES in 1914. They eventually divorced and he went on to marry Philomena (née BECKETT) TONKIN in 1937.

George and Evelina's final child was Nina Louvima Shann who was born on 23 September 1892 in Methven. She did not get married although she did have a son, Ian. Her middle name, Louvima, was made from the royal princesses' names—Louisa, Victoria and Maud.

George was recorded as the Methven Public Library Librarian from 1906–1913. As daughter Laura (my great-grandmother) was a librarian before the marriage, perhaps her father was officially recorded in this role.

George died on 16 November 1913 at Methven of apoplexy and a cerebral haemorrhage which he had suffered for one day. George was 72 years of age and was born in Ripon, England. He had been in New Zealand for 38 years and was a retired railway employee. His burial was on 18 November 1913 at Methven Cemetery. He had daughters aged 42, 33, 27 and 21 and sons aged 40, 30 and 25. His parents were recorded as Thomas and Elizabeth (née Gill) Shann. He married Evelin [sic] Muschamp at age 27 in Yorkshire, England.

The following death notice appeared in the *Ashburton Guardian* on 17 November 1913: 'SHANN—On November 16, at his residence, Methven, George, beloved husband of Evelina Shann, in his 72nd year. (Late of New Zealand Railways.)'

The burial entry for George reveals the epitaph on his headstone: 'In Loving Memory of George, husband of Evelina Shann died 16 November 1913 aged 71. O Lord how joyful 'tis to see, the Brethren join in love to Thee, On thee alone their heart relies, Their only strength thy grace supplies.'

Lianne Sloan

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Sources:

- Baptism entry for Thomas Shann (29 May 1842)
- Marriage entry for Thomas Shann and Elizabeth Gill
- Census Returns for 1851, 1861 and 1871
- Marriage entry for George Shann and Evelina Muschamp
- Birth certificates and entries for all children of George and Evelina
- Marriage certificates and entries for children
- Death certificate for George Shann
- Burial record for George Shann
- Death and funeral notices for George Shann
- Muschamp certificates and knowledge through many years of research including the *Cathcart* voyage report and the *Star of China* reports
- The *Star of China* Shipping Record
- Thistle Court Installation of Officers article in *Evening Echo/Ashburton Herald* on 3 December 1878
- Police Court article in *Evening Echo/Ashburton Herald* on 28 January 1879 relating to Patrick Dunn. George as witness.
- Grand Lodge of New Zealand Freemasons letter in 2000
- Railway Collision articles in *Ashburton Guardian* on 11 March 1879 and 17 April 1879
- James Austin accused of being drunk and causing damage to George's uniform in *Ashburton Herald* on 25 April 1879
- Return of Freeholders of New Zealand—October 1882
- Masonic Ball published in the *Ashburton Guardian* on 9 September 1912
- Methven School 65th Jubilee article in the *Ashburton Guardian* on 29 March 1947
- Methven School Committee article in *Ashburton Guardian* on 16 February 1886
- Lodges and Freemasonry history—All Overviews, Britannica.com, United Grand Lodge of England and Freemasons New Zealand

Editor's Note: A good resource for those tracing their Freemason ancestors is: Weinbren, Daniel. *Tracing your Freemason, Friendly Society and Trade Union Ancestors—a guide for family historians*, Pen and Sword, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, 2019



The Shann Family
Phoebe, George, James, Laura, Charles, Nina,
George and Evelina
Sloan family collection

Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga
ARCHIVES
 NEW ZEALAND

gum reserve files, digging licences, land leases, applications to occupy land and disputes over access.

Many gum diggers were migrants, especially from Dalmatia, now part of Croatia. Records relating to immigration, naturalisation, alien registration and, in some cases, wartime internment or surveillance can help researchers learn more about their lives.

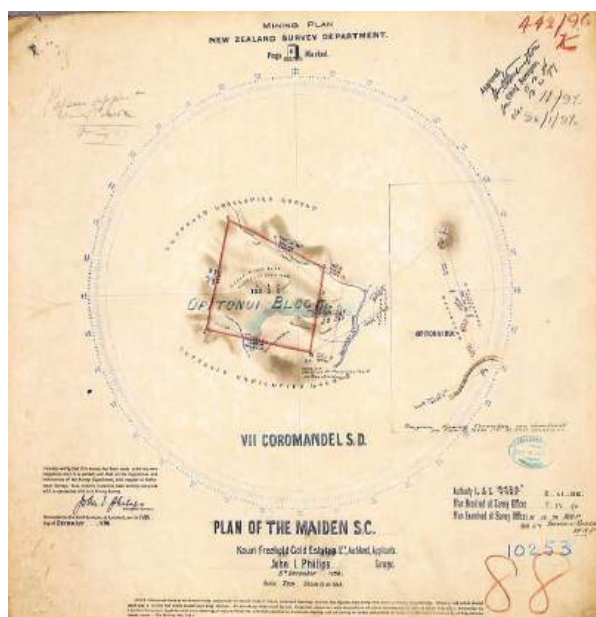
Coal mining

From 1849 until the turn of the nineteenth century, coal mining grew from a small, seasonal activity into a major industry, dominated by the Union Steam Ship Company. In 1901 the government responded to the monopoly by creating State Coal Mines. Government involvement increased further during World War II, when coal mining became an essential industry.

Archives New Zealand holds records relating to both state and private coal mining operations. These include Mines Inspection Office files covering mines, tunnels and quarries, and prospecting and exploration licences. Other useful records include employee cards, appointment files, accident investigations, compensation records and mining leases. Wage and time record books include names, occupations and hours worked per fortnight. Auckland holds wage books dating from 1925 to 1984 for some state coal mines in Waikato and Taranaki.

Mine accidents and compensation records

Mining was a dangerous occupation, and the records reflect that reality. Accident reports and compensation files often document events that changed the course of a family's life. Archives New Zealand holds a series of compensation files relating to accidents in the mining industry. These records are listed under the person's surname and initial. Some accident and compensation records are restricted. Contact an archivist to find out whether access is available and how to request permission.



Kauri Freehold Gold Estates claim for the Maiden mine in Opitonui block, 1894.

Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, item code R25288861 www.flickr.com/photos/archivesnz/9627687378

Maps and plans

Maps and plans are another valuable resource for mining research. These include Crown land plans, survey plans, district maps showing gum reserves, and maps of coal and gold mining areas. They can help family historians identify where an ancestor lived and worked, as well as the communities connected to mining activity. However, pinpointing the exact location of a mining claim can sometimes be difficult.

If you think you have a miner in your family tree, start by searching Collections search. You may uncover records that place your ancestor at a particular mine, reveal details of their work or shed light on the community they called home.

Kelly Dix, Online Engagement Manager, Digital NZ
E: kelly.dix@dia.govt.nz

Sources:

- www.archives.govt.nz/discover-our-stories/goldmining-in-the-coromandel
- www.archives.govt.nz/research-guidance/research-guides/identity/family-history-dunedin
- www.archives.govt.nz/discover-our-stories/the-mixed-blessing-of-a-fingerprint
- www.archives.govt.nz/research-guidance/research-guides/employment
- www.archives.govt.nz/research-guidance/research-guides/citizenship-and-migration/citizenship



'Old Biddy' (aka Bridget Goodwin), the well-known West Coast gold digger, 31 July 1893.
Archives New Zealand Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga, item code R26186804 www.flickr.com/photos/archivesnz/51320701781

Triumph: The Ship that Hit the Lighthouse

By David Johnson

Published by Dunmore Press, 1981

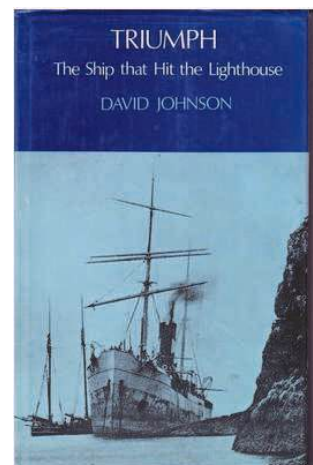
Have you ever heard of a steamer after dropping off the deputy-harbourmaster and then farewelling the pilot, setting its course directly for a lighthouse? Initially, the lighthouse keepers on Tiritiri Island thought that it was their supply ship the *Stella*. It was, however, a much larger vessel which crashed onto the rocks below them.

Even by 1883 there were numerous procedures which followed an accident. Two public inquiries took place which, to a degree, indicated that in addition to disorganisation of the crew, there was a degree of intoxication of some crew members. BROTHERTON, the captain, fell asleep on the bridge. O'HALLORAN, the watch, claimed that he yelled several times to 'put your helm a port'.

The complex issues raised show a lack of clear procedures being followed. The book would have benefitted from a list

of the crew with their responsibilities. One is left with the conclusion that if all ships were organised like this, then it was a miracle that more ships did not founder.

Reviewed by Helen McLaren
FRC Shelf Label:
SHP.SHIP.TRIUMPH



The Last Secret Agent

By Pippa Latour with Jude Dobson

Published by Allen & Unwin, 2024

Born on a wharf in Durban, South Africa in 1921, Pippa went on to have an equally unconventional life. With both her parents dead by the time she was six years old, her relatives and six godmothers provided her with homes and education. Her fluency with languages, knowledge of Morse code, ability to climb and swing from vines, in addition to a nomadic lifestyle among other skills, eminently fitted her for life as a secret agent.



Uncertainty in Europe in the late 1930s led to Pippa attempting unsuccessfully to take the long walk from France to Spain. Returning to France, she was eventually shipped out to the United Kingdom. After learning secretarial skills, she worked for the Admiralty at Arden Castle, Scotland. Later, joining the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF), she worked at a balloon unit, then

trained as a flight mechanic. With her training completed, she was then interviewed in London ostensibly for a role in which she was to use her languages.

Being reassigned to the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANYs) and training for the Special Operations Executive (SOE, nicknamed Stately 'omes of England) included climbing in multi-storey buildings, and Pippa was told by the instructor (an ex-burglar) that he would be able to give her a job after the war. Eventually all the training resulted in her overseas posting in France where she posed as a teenage soap seller. Life was not easy in France, and at the conclusion she was waif-like, having lost 11 kilograms.

Post-war, Pippa declared that she would never return to France and she never did. She married and produced a family, never telling them of her war work. It was by accident that she and her children ended up in New Zealand, Pippa having thought she was boarding a plane for Australia. She died here in 2024.

Reviewed by Margaret McGavin
FRC Shelf Label: ENG.BIO.LATOUR

Members' enquiries and notices

This section is free to members for enquiries of a genealogical nature but is not available to non-members. Please be precise and state clearly what you want to know. For submission guidelines see the front of this journal. Where no details of a query are given it is presumed that the inquirer would be grateful for any information. When someone has taken the trouble to write to you with reference to your request for information, please acknowledge their letter whether the information they have shared is of use or not. It is customary to repay their postage.

Lost Rowe family bible

The ROWE family were tin miners who came from Camborne, Cornwall, United Kingdom. They migrated to the newly established tin mines in Adelaide and went with the gold rush, first to Melbourne and then to Gabriels Gully and Lawrence in Otago.

The family bible was passed down the male line and given to my brother, Ian Seppran Rowe, approximately 25 years ago. Sadly, when he died last year, the bible was not among his things. From Auckland, my brother moved to Waihi, Tokoroa, Gisborne and Napier/Hastings.

I am hoping someone has it and does not know how to get it back to us. We would like it to be passed on to my nephew, Ian's son.

Wendy Rowe

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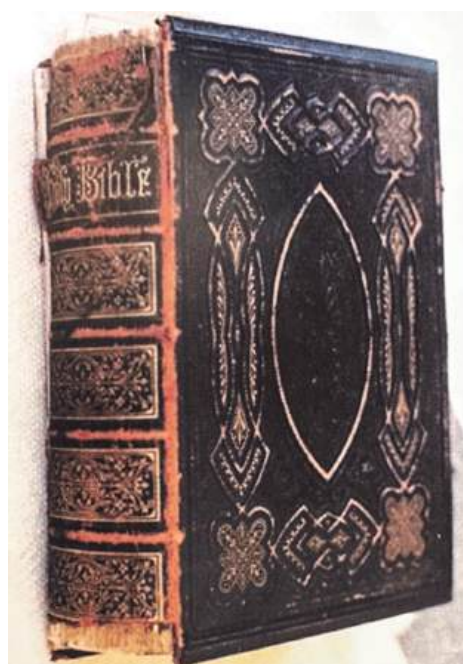


Image above: The outside of
Rowe family bible



Image left: A page from
inside the bible showing
family details

Sale of microfiche

I have for sale microfiche of NZ BDMS 1840–1930 plus 41 other sets: Births 3, Deaths 4, Estates, Wills and Probates 8, Marriages 5, Parish Registers 2, Shipping 7, First Settlers 1, Electoral Rolls 2, Directories 2, Land 3, War 4. A full list can be obtained via email.

The highest offer will be accepted. Pick-up is available from Christchurch or Timaru.

Zahlia Burroughs

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Nurse Hayhurst

The HAYHURST family had associations with Temuka. Canterbury Museum archives hold a photo of a young Māori woman titled 'Nurse Hayhurst' but she is definitely not a Hayhurst. The family would like to identify her real name and have that listed.

This photo is by the mid-nineteenth century Christchurch photographer Dr A C BARKER, and is titled 'Nurse Hayhurst holding baby William Barker', no date. The child is his son, William Edward Barker, born August 1858, so this was probably taken late 1860 when the child was around two years old.

The only Hayhurst child she could have been associated with before 1860 was the daughter of 18-year-old Margaret Hayhurst (sister of John), born out of wedlock in July 1857 in Kaiapoi. Margaret married and moved to Temuka to live with her brother, John Hayhurst, and his wife. I think it is likely that 'Nurse Hayhurst' was recruited from the nearby Arowhenua Pa to be a live-in nurse and home help, assisting the young mother with her new baby, Kate, and thus became known as 'Nurse Hayhurst'.

A C Barker knew the Hayhurst family. He also had some land in the Temuka area. I assume he asked John Hayhurst

if 'Nurse Hayhurst' could move to his Christchurch home to help with his son in late 1858/early 1859, his wife having died a few weeks after the birth, leaving him with two others under five years—there is no doubt A C Barker needed a nurse when his wife died.

It was probably advantageous for this young Māori girl to be known by the name 'Hayhurst'—a widely known and respected pakeha family in South Canterbury by 1858. Nine months of searching has led nowhere. Canterbury Museum archives have no other information than what A C Barker wrote on the photo. I have posted the photo and story on Facebook sites where Māori photos are often shared, seeking identification of people. No luck there either.

Marguerite Foxon
E: margfoxon@yahoo.com

The photo can be accessed here:
collection.canterburymuseum.com/objects/814553/photograph-william-barker-and-nurse-hayhurst



Photo of 'Nurse Hayhurst'

Send your enquiry or notice to
editor@genealogy.org.nz

Branch News



Fortieth anniversary of the Riccarton Branch, New Zealand Society of Genealogists

In 1986 a change in the genealogy landscape occurred in Canterbury. With over 400 members of the Canterbury Branch and an average attendance of 100 at each meeting, something needed to happen. A few members of the Canterbury Branch got together and created the Riccarton Branch, NZSG. We were pleased to have Merle CONAGHAN with us at our 40th anniversary on 16 May 2026; Merle is a foundation member from 1986. Her presence and past efforts in genealogy were recognised as she assisted in cutting our 40th anniversary cake.

The opening address from the current convenor, William SCHOCH, thanked those who started the branch and those current members present on the day. He also acknowledged the passing of members within the past few years; these included:

- Win LOACH, branch life member
- Peter HENTSCHEL, committee
- Jean CLIFTON, foundation member, secretary
- Judith PAY, secretary, convenor
- Alan TUNNICLIFFE, foundation member, branch life member, convenor

William highlighted the changes and advances made in family history research over the years. From letters to family, government departments via New Zealand Post, to good old detective work in libraries, graveyards and churches. Over time, the internet has assisted in tracking down and removing bricks from our walls.

Digitisation followed and suddenly the genealogist had access to census records, travel documents, Wills and government archives. Allowing us to fill the negative spaces and the 'dash' just became a bit easier. Multiple genealogy websites allowed the creation of individual trees, which has enhanced our search achievements.

DNA and the advances in AI (Artificial Intelligence) led the meeting onto the guest speaker, Fiona BROOKER, from 'Memories in Time'. She entertained and upskilled the audience on the modern era of AI. She spoke about ChatGPT, OpenAI and other AI Helpers. The members were seen to be writing furiously to get as much knowledge on paper as quickly as they could. Make sure you tell the AI bot who they are, who you are, what level of response you want and an idea of what info you want it to produce.

The meeting concluded with the presentation of awards as follows:

- Anne DAVISON received the Branch Service Award for her work as branch treasurer. She was instrumental in changing banks, along with her volunteer position at Riccarton Library genealogy computer.
- Kathy HILL received a Branch Life Membership. Her involvement at Riccarton is immense; Kathy has been convenor, secretary and librarian. She was awarded the NZSG Branch Service Award in 2019. In addition, Kathy has produced many books for the branch and made presentations at monthly meetings.



The anniversary concluded with our last foundation member cutting the cake and an afternoon tea provided by the Selwyn Women's Lions Club.

Left: Bill Schoch (Convenor) and Kathy Hill (Librarian) discussing the Anniversary book 'Genealogy can be fun'

Right: Merle Conaghan cutting the cake

Far North Branch

The Far North Branch was pleased and proud to acknowledge the hard work over many years of three of our long-standing members. Heather ROGERS received a Branch Service Award for her years of service as Branch Treasurer (amongst other things). Gaye SIMMS also received a Branch Service Award for her many years of service to the Branch—unfortunately, Gaye was otherwise committed on meeting day.

To top it off, we were so happy to hear that the NZSG had recognised the many years of service and hard work at local and national level of our Convenor, Barbara WYLEY, by presenting her with Life Membership.



Heather Rogers



Barbara Wyley

Hibiscus Coast Branch research day

June 23 arrived, and the committee plus some helpful husbands arrived at St Chad's Church to set up for our Open Research Day. As it had been many years since we had held one, this was a first for many of the committee.

Committee Members:

Rear (L-R): Peter KENNARD (Treasurer), Eileen REVELL, John CURTIS, Dick MOGRIDGE, Carol BELL, Garry PHILLIPS, Alan JENNER, Jan Marie GOODWIN, Mandy WOLSTENHOLME

Front (L-R): Grant HODGSON, Wený INSKEEP (Convenor), Phillippa KIDD, Chris INGRAM

Absent: Wendy PATON



Research Group



Above: Chris Ingram

While final setting up and registration were happening along with a lot of chat, 'Ancestry unpacked' videos were showing in the church and hall to introduce people to them.

Our visiting speaker, Geraldene O'REILLY, was kept busy all day with Irish questions and providing help, and for those with Scottish interests, Christine TREGONNING was there to assist them.

Sandra METCALFE, using Teams online, gave a very popular talk on 'Using DNA Alongside Your Genealogy Research'.

Half-hour slots provided in all three breakout rooms gave an opportunity for volunteers to explain or answer questions on RootsMagic, Legacy, ASH, Whakapapa, English Resources, Writing a Family History and Tips on Administering your Family Tree.

Smaller tables around the room with volunteers at each allowed people to ask individual questions and the volunteers were also able to cover a variety of topics, e.g. Fencibles, Beginners, NZSG, Thistles and MyHeritage.

For those needing a break from all the information being provided, there was a more relaxing display by Chris Ingram on scrapbooking and a jewellery tree. A visitor also brought along his postcard collection and knowledge about local history.

A great day was had by all, which was no doubt helped along by Carol Bell providing continuous tea and coffee.

Wendy Inskeep, Convenor, Hibiscus Coast

North Shore Memorial Park (also known as Schnapper Rock Cemetery)

After many years, and with the help of a number of the North Shore Branch members, we are now able to release the database for the North Shore Memorial Park Cemetery (also known as Schnapper Rock Cemetery) headstones.



North Shore Memorial Park map

This project began more than 15 years ago when a team of branch members started photographing the headstones. Each name and location was entered into a spreadsheet. Unfortunately, this was 'shelved' for some years before the disks and paperwork were 'found' when the branch library was disbanded in 2015. Paul ASHTON took on the task of setting up a database which included all areas of the cemetery (headstones, plaques, under trees, grass berms etc.) being given a specific, unique number. Members re-photographed some of the headstones, new ones were

added, and the database was checked against the original photographs and data. Time elapsed, with work still being done spasmodically, until it was put into a searchable software program which is now on our website.

The branch acknowledges all those involved with this project during the period 2009 to 2013, especially Shirley McINTYRE, Sheryl PAWSON and Sue SPEIGHT, who were on the project for 'the long haul'. Also, Julie BURR, Judith and Brian LEYDEN, Judi WIGBY, Margaret CORNFORTH, Jacki WALLEES and the following members who have since passed away: Kay and Royce OVEREND, Leone BRONLUND, Peter CROSS and Muriel DICK. During the period 2018–2020, Paul Ashton, John HAMMOND, Ian WINKEL (deceased), Lynne Winkel, Dennise COOK, Sheila CHARMAN, Linda PINDER and Shirley TURNER worked on the project. The final 'push' was thanks to Paul Ashton, Ian Winkel and John Hammond, and thanks go to Thomas DICKSON, a university student, who designed the software program for this database.

A mammoth job, considering the size of this cemetery (more than 25,000 names on the database), by all who have been involved. Perhaps in a few years, the photographs and database will be updated. Please refer to the back of *The New Zealand Genealogist* or our branch newsletter for details on obtaining an image of the headstone or plaque.

Headstones at North Shore Memorial Park



A 30 per cent membership increase—what worked for Cambridge

At the beginning of 2026, the Cambridge Genealogy Group took a close look at its finances. Like many community organisations, our costs had been rising while membership numbers had remained largely static. Around 85 per cent of our expenses are fixed, with the rental of our library and research room by far the highest cost. We realised that every additional member would contribute significantly to the branch's financial sustainability while adding new ideas and enthusiasm. Our committee therefore decided to focus on growing membership rather than increasing subscriptions or meeting door charges during a period of cost-of-living pressures.

Our first initiative was to have a stand at Cambridge's Autumn Festival. With support from NZSG, which supplied promotional material, and assistance from two NZSG representatives, committee members staffed an attractive display of posters, brochures and photographs. Visitors could join the branch, enter a draw for a free year's membership, and receive complimentary admission to one of our monthly meetings. We also offered people the opportunity to join NZSG on the day, including the one-year complimentary Kiwi Collection.

The event itself was only the beginning. Everyone who expressed interest received a thank-you email, our monthly newsletter and invitations to subsequent meetings over the following three months. At those meetings we made a point

of personally welcoming visitors, introducing them to other members and helping them feel part of the group.

Our second initiative combined fundraising with promotion at the local Trash 'n Treasure market. Members generously donated items to sell, and while the stall raised more than 20 per cent of our annual library rental costs, it also provided another opportunity to talk with people about genealogy, our branch and NZSG. We have decided to participate every two or three months. We have also encouraged members to bring friends to selected monthly meetings, with free admission for first-time visitors.

The results have exceeded our expectations. Since the beginning of the year, we have welcomed 17 new members—an increase of almost 30 per cent. We have already run a beginners' class attended by nine of those new members and are developing a mentoring programme to help them continue their genealogy journey.

If there is one lesson we would share with other branches, it is this: community events generate interest, but personal follow-up converts interest into membership. Growing membership is only the first step; helping new members become confident researchers and active participants is what will sustain that growth for years to come.



Cambridge Genealogy Group stand at Autumn Festival



**Need help with your sources?
Check out Skills/Research Skills
www.genealogy.org.nz**

Whanganui Branch

AGMs are a great time to reflect on the year that has passed and the next year that will pass extremely quickly. As a branch, we have faced some challenging times in the last six months. However, the heartening support from our members, and, in particular, past convenor Frances HADDOCK, has meant that we completed the year in good spirits.

We have gone from three 'acting' roles on our committee to a committee that is full and brimming with ideas. We also have wonderful support from outside our committee.

We were very pleased at the AGM to award two of our members, Andrea CADE and Lincoln PAUL, with life membership. Both have contributed enormously to the branch over a long period of time. Details of their contributions are in our July Newsletter, on the NZSG website, as no brief outline will properly convey the extent of their support. We also awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to long-time member Jenny WRIGHT, for her continued work on our School Records Collection. Thank you were extended to Teresa NEIL as immediate past convenor, and Frances Haddock, who stepped up (again) to ensure we had a full committee when the need arose.

One of our most exciting achievements in the 2025/26 year was the completion of the Service People of Heads Road

Cemetery series of three volumes. They are proving to be extremely useful, and as a gene volunteer, I can vouch for the fact that I pull them from our branch library shelf often when researching early settler families. So many of our early settlers were part of the 65th Regiment in particular, but there are also service people from the Boer War, WWI and even a few from WWII represented in these volumes. We are printing the volumes in small print runs as people show interest in buying them. These books are not a fundraising project, and the price we have charged covers the cost of printing and a small number of donations of the volumes to people who have contributed heavily to the project. They continue to be available to buy. If you are interested, or would like more information, please contact us at: whanganui@genealogy.org.nz

As a branch, each year we try to have a meeting that is more interactive than usual. In the past this has included an historic pub walk, and our radio play, Murder, Mystery and Mayhem, from 2025, repeated by request for the 'La Fiesta' event earlier this year in March. We do find that these events engage people who may not have thought about joining a genealogy group, extending our reach into the community.



We now have ALL Volumes I, II & III available of SERVICE PEOPLE COMMEMORATED at Heads Road Cemetery, Whanganui.

Orders for any or all volumes, or requests for the index of biographies and a sample biography, can be made by emailing Whanganui Branch NZSG at whanganui@genealogy.org.nz

The cost for each volume is **\$70.00** for financial Whanganui Branch Members; **\$77.00** for non-members

Please include the following details:

- Name:
- Email Address:
- Phone Number:

Books can be collected from the Alexander Heritage Library or you can contact us regarding alternative arrangements

Nelson Branch

Tēnā koutou katoa

I bring you greetings from the NZSG Nelson Branch. I have not written since we celebrated our 50th birthday in September 2023, so this reminder of our activities and records for research is long overdue. As Convenor for our May 2026 AGM, it was a pleasure to receive nominations for all the committee positions and to have a record number of members present to show their support. During the year 75 per cent of our presentations have come from the membership and, in the winter months, several of them led small workshops at our library, 'Ancestors Attic', on researching German ancestors, computers, AI and DNA.

Our library is open three days a week (closed on public holidays). If you are coming from a distance, it would be an advantage to check in (email address below) in case of unexpected closures. Sadly, our Nelson Provincial Museum is now closed until next year. We are looking forward to a bigger and brighter purpose-built structure to keep our taonga safe and to improve access for research.

For genealogical research questions, our Society has a huge range of predominantly Nelson/Tasman records for research and a Nelson/Tasman Biographical Index made up from a comprehensive variety of resources. An ongoing project has been collecting and indexing newspaper family announcements since the 1930s. These are complemented by our collection of Nelson/Tasman family histories, registrar-annotated electoral rolls 1925–1960 and funeral sheets. Our update of the Nelson/West Coast cemetery collection is a work in progress.

My focus has been on getting information out to all those budding genealogists in the community. NZSG Nelson Branch has had a table at the community days organised by Nelson City and Tasman Councils and the 'Collecting History' Information Day hosted by the Philatelic Society. Their advertising is more extensive and cost-effective.

Another community project we are participating in is a further tranche of the *Nelson Evening Mail* to be digitised on Papers Past. This will bring them from 1945 to 1965.

Nelson research queries can be emailed to the Secretary, who will forward them to the appropriate researcher. So, until you can visit, below are some Nelson websites which may be of use.

Ngā mihi and happy researching.

Judith Fitchett, Convenor

New Zealand Society of Genealogists Nelson Branch Inc.
Library and Volunteers: Ancestors Attic at 67 Trafalgar Street, Monday 11am–2pm, Thursday 9.30am–3.30pm, Sunday 2pm–4pm. Monthly meetings and research queries: email nelson@genealogy.org

Facebook www.facebook.com/p/Nelson-Branch-New-Zealand-Society-of-Genealogists-100080322018549/

Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough historical and cultural stories www.theprow.org.nz/

Nelson Provincial Museum collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/explore

NZSG members can find more in our Kiwi Resources: genealogy.org.nz/Nelson/11521/



Ancestors Attic



Looking to meet others who
share your love of
family history?
Find your nearest Branch
under Connect on our website
www.genealogy.org.nz



Online DNA Interest Group

A FREE benefit of NZSG membership

Sandra Metcalfe on behalf of the ODIG Planning Committee

To register with ODIG, or for further information on accessing the Google Classroom, visit the NZSG website (genealogy.org.nz). Click on the DNA tab on the homepage menu, click on Online DNA Interest Group, then click on Join Here. If you are not yet a member of the NZSG, you will need to join that first. If you have any issues, please email onlinedna@genealogy.org.nz

Solving brick walls: The Genealogical Proof Standard and DNA analysis—two sides of the same coin

Every genealogist eventually encounters a brick wall—a point where the available records appear to run out and conventional research methods stop producing new information. It may be impossible to identify a person's parents, confirm a place of origin, or extend a family line despite years of careful research.

Fortunately, today's genealogists have access to a powerful tool that previous generations could only dream about—DNA. Traditional documentary research and DNA analysis are not competing methods; rather, they are two sides of the same coin. When used together, they provide stronger evidence than either can alone. Documentary research tells us what the records say, while DNA helps confirm—or sometimes challenge—the conclusions we reach from those records.

The Genealogical Proof Standard

The Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS), developed by the Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG), provides a framework for reaching reliable genealogical conclusions. Although it was designed for professional genealogists, its principles are equally valuable for family historians at every level. (See the [Getting It Right](#) on the GPS)

The GPS consists of five key elements:

1. Reasonably exhaustive research—Search widely and thoroughly using all relevant sources, not simply those that are easiest to access.
2. Complete and accurate source citations—Record where every piece of information came from so others, and your future self, can locate it again.
3. Analysis and correlation of evidence—Evaluate each source carefully and compare information from multiple records.
4. Resolution of conflicting evidence—Investigate discrepancies rather than ignoring them, and determine which evidence is most reliable.
5. A soundly reasoned written conclusion—Document how you reached your conclusion and explain why the evidence supports it.

The internet has transformed genealogy by making millions of records available from home. However, only a fraction of the world's historical records have been digitised or indexed. Archives, libraries, museums and local repositories still hold enormous quantities of material that can only be accessed in person or through specialist enquiries.

Equally important is recognising that 'reasonably exhaustive research' is not a fixed target. New collections are digitised every year, indexes are continually improved, and records previously thought to be unavailable suddenly become accessible. A search completed five years ago—or even five months ago—may produce entirely different results today.

Good researchers also record what they did not find. Keeping track of unsuccessful searches, repositories consulted and collections examined helps avoid repeating work and demonstrates that alternative possibilities have been considered. It is easy to make assumptions based on incomplete evidence, but those assumptions can lead us down the wrong family line.

Where DNA fits

DNA analysis complements the Genealogical Proof Standard remarkably well. Like documentary evidence, DNA should never be viewed in isolation. Instead, it becomes another source of evidence to analyse, compare and correlate with traditional records.

DNA can:

- confirm documentary conclusions
- identify which family line an unknown ancestor belongs to
- distinguish between individuals with the same name
- reveal previously unknown relationships
- provide new research leads when documentary evidence has been exhausted.

Rather than replacing traditional research, DNA strengthens it. The strongest genealogical conclusions are usually those supported by both documentary and genetic evidence.

Using DNA Painter's Ancestral Trees

dnainter.com/#trees

One particularly useful tool for combining traditional genealogy with DNA analysis is DNA Painter's Ancestral Trees. Unlike a conventional pedigree chart, these have been designed specifically with DNA analysis in mind.

By importing a GEDCOM file or creating a tree manually, genealogists can visualise their direct ancestors and apply filters that reveal different aspects of their genetic inheritance. The tool can help you:

- assess how complete your ancestral tree is
- identify which ancestral lines are represented by DNA matches and which remain under-tested
- visualise Y-DNA, mitochondrial DNA and X-chromosome inheritance paths
- identify pedigree collapse where ancestors appear more than once in the tree
- search quickly for surnames or places of interest
- annotate uncertain relationships or brick wall ancestors requiring further investigation.

One of the greatest strengths of Ancestral Trees is that it helps focus research effort. By highlighting gaps in both your documentary research and your DNA coverage, it becomes much easier to identify which ancestral lines are most likely to benefit from additional testing or further documentary investigation.

In the December article, we will explore DNA Painter's Ancestral Trees in greater detail, demonstrating how the filtering and visualisation tools can be used to target research, evaluate DNA matches and tackle some of our most persistent genealogical brick walls.

Editor's Note: Jonny Perl, founder of dnainter.com, is the keynote speaker at the AFFHO Congress. Find out more about his presentations at affhocongress.org/introducing-our-speakers/

DNA education for beginners—the third leg of the ODIG stool

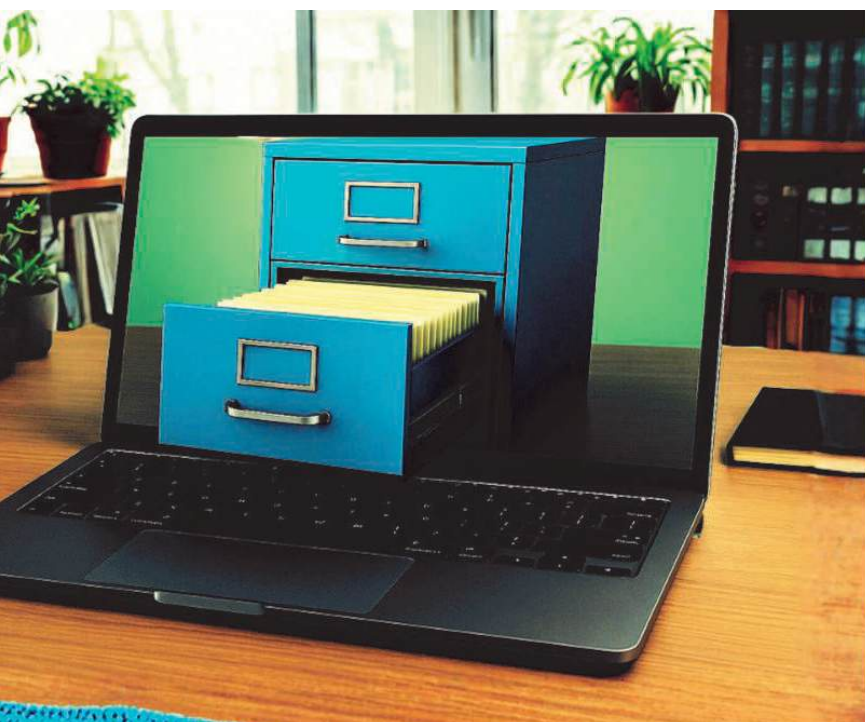
When the Online DNA Interest Group (ODIG) was established in 2023, its primary goal was to develop educational courses for people new to DNA. However, it soon became clear that while education was the long-term objective, ODIG also needed to 'get runs on the board' quickly. As a result, the monthly live presentations were launched. By the end of 2023, the Resource Classroom had also been established, providing a growing collection of material for everyone from beginners to experienced DNA researchers. Both of these are provided free to financial NZSG members.

Earlier this year, two members of the ODIG team turned their attention to the third leg of the stool—developing a structured DNA education programme for beginners. A pilot course involving 14 participants was held in March and April. The feedback was very encouraging, but it also

highlighted opportunities to refine the course, leading to a second pilot programme in July and August.

Alongside these 'DNA for Beginners' pilot courses, the team also developed a self-paced, self-assessed 'Technology Foundations Course'. This course is currently being trialled and, once feedback has been reviewed and any necessary improvements made, it will be made available to all NZSG members who wish to strengthen their technology skills before embarking on DNA research.

Together, the live presentations, Resource Classroom, and beginner education courses now provide the three complementary pillars of ODIG's commitment to helping NZSG members build their knowledge and confidence in using DNA for family history research.



**Preserve your precious digital
family history documents with the**

**NZSG Digital
Archive**

**This is a free service for
NZSG Members**

Irish Interest Group



Ulster Historical Foundation (UHF)

The UHF report has been able to make significant improvements to several of their key genealogical databases. These updates include adding locations to records where possible, correcting errors, enhancing details, and optimising over 30,000 records for easier and more accurate searching. As well as these corrections and updates, over 70,000 NEW records have also been added to their website. Some of these new additions include:

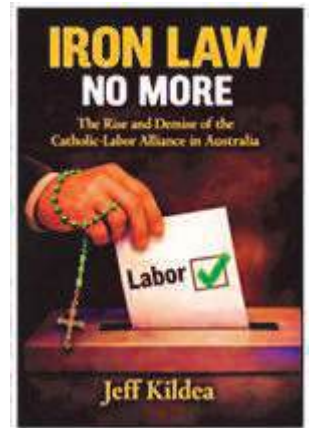
- Belfast Co-Op Consumers of Coal, 1947
- Biographical Index of Irish Immigrants to South Australia, 1836–1885
- Businessmen who issued tokens in Ireland, 1653–1679
- Census of Donaghendry Parish, Co. Tyrone, c 1840
- Census of the Templeton Estate, Co. Antrim, 1846
- Collectors of Taxes in Ireland, 1678
- Deaths Recorded in South Carolina, USA, Newspapers, 1806–1838
- Early Ulster Military Records including Militia Lists, Muster Rolls and Yeomanry Lists
- Emigrants Cited on Co. Down Gravestones, 1790–1948
- Emigrants from Ulster cited on Troy, New York Gravestones, 1828–1896
- Employment of the Industrious Blind, 1871–1875
- Irishmen who served in the Spanish Netherlands, 1581–1672
- List of Good Tea Agents in Ireland, 1855
- List of Motor Spirit Dealers, 1922
- List of Transportees to Australia, 1830–1845
- List of Wholesale Grocers in Northern Ireland, 1924
- Offer of Service from the Tenants of Lord Charles Fitzgerald, c 1798
- Owners of Motor Transport in Banbridge, Co. Down, 1924
- Pawnbrokers Registered in Ireland, 1832–1844
- Robertson's Parochial National School Register, Raphoe Co. Donegal, 1871–1900
- Shares in Belfast Ropeworks, 1941
- Tenantry of Lord Oriel of the Ferrard Barony, 1820–1827

www.ulsterhistoricalfoundation.com

The Catholic-Labor alliance in Australia

It was once an iron law of Australian politics that the only way for a Catholic to participate and succeed in public life was through the Labor Party because the non-Labor side of politics was a closed shop and Catholics need not apply. Today, Catholics are as numerous and well-placed in the Coalition parties as they are in the Labor Party, if not more

so. *Iron Law No More* examines how and why the Catholic-Labor alliance emerged in the early twentieth century, how it led in the 1940s to Labor governments in which more than half the caucus and the cabinet were Catholics, and the reasons for its demise in the last quarter of the twentieth century. It also looks at the exceptions who proved the rule, the handful of Catholics, such as John Cramer and Phillip Lynch, who, despite the iron law, succeeded in the non-Labor parties, when so many others could not.



Irish Family History Foundation (IFHF)

RootsIreland have the most complete and most accurate set of Roman Catholic Church records online, as well as millions of Protestant records, civil records, census records, headstone inscriptions and census substitutes. Our index is easily searchable and has features such as standardised surname and forename searches which make your searches even more user-friendly.

They hold over 23 million records, and our database is being added to continually. Since 2020, they have added over one million records to their database from Limerick, Clare, Sligo, Kerry, Wicklow, Westmeath, Kilkenny, South Dublin, South Tipperary, Monaghan, Armagh, North Mayo, Cork, Laois, Offaly and Galway. Last year they added almost 170,000 records from (counties) Kerry, Monaghan, Cork, Antrim, Down, Wexford, Dublin, Fermanagh and Tipperary.

Together, our 31 genealogy centres have unparalleled local knowledge which can be invaluable to those tracing their ancestors, a service which no other website or company can provide to such a high standard. By taking out a subscription with RootsIreland, you are helping these centres to continue to provide a world-class service and securing many Irish jobs.

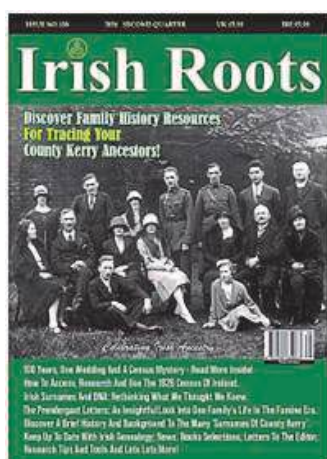
[Extracted from IFHF webpage]

View their county record updates at 'Blog and News'
www.rootsireland.ie/category/blog/

Their recent announcements introduce over 24,000 Co. Clare births, marriages and deaths added. Co. Tipperary Cappawhite 10,000 RC births and marriages. The Galway Family History Society at Woodford House is now the official records centre for all Galway City, County and Islands family research services. This Society has over 1.4m records to search online at www.rootsireland.ie and a

recent addition of 43,652 records. Current Blog/News includes a book review of Dr William Roulston's *Researching Ulster Ancestors 1800–1914*—(nine counties of Ulster).

Irish Roots



Irish Roots magazine no. 138 Second Quarter 2026—among the articles in this issue are: How to Access, Research and Use The 1926 Census of Ireland by Zoe Reid; Irish Surnames and DNA: Rethinking what we Thought we Knew by Donna Rutherford; Local resources for Family History by James G. Ryan; Discover a brief History and Background to the many 'Surnames of co. Kerry' by Seán O Murchadha and Researching My Ancient Irish Ancestry Using The Y and

mtDNA of My Ancestors by Rob Flanagan Stieglitz. Check out their news items: LATEST FROM THE BLOG. Irish Roots is also available in digital format—

www.irishrootsmedia.com

Virtual Record Treasury Ireland (VRTI)

The VRTI is an international research partnership established to digitally reconstruct the Public Record Office of Ireland, much of which was destroyed by fire on 30 June 1922 early in the Civil War—an event that obliterated seven centuries of Irish archival records. This year's release marks the 104th anniversary of the fire.

A recent statement from VRTI: 'Nearly 200,000 newly released historical records have pushed the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland beyond the half-million mark, while a new initiative aims to uncover Ireland's documentary heritage in French archives.' This brings the total number of freely available records on the online resource to 544,000. virtualltreasury.ie/genealogy-resources

The Irish Genealogical Research Society (IGRS)

The IGRS, the world's oldest organisation dedicated to the study and preservation of Irish family history, was founded in 1936 in response to the destruction of Ireland's Public Record Office in 1922. The Society has spent nine decades championing the research, recording and understanding of Ireland's documentary heritage. This year, 2026, heralds the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Irish Genealogical Research Society in 1936.

A Year of Global Celebration

In marking its 90th anniversary, the Society will deliver a worldwide programme of events across 2026, reflecting the Society's international membership and deep connections with the Irish diaspora. This aspect of the celebrations will recognise the Irish heritage of people throughout the world, embracing all traditions that contribute to Irish identity.



Events are scheduled across Australia, Canada, the United States, England, Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. Venues include prominent archives, libraries and genealogical institutions, with local Irish communities and diaspora partners playing a central role.

www.irishancestors.ie/events

The speakers include a wide range of experts foremost in their field and many with long years of experience.

Renewed Focus on Preservation, Access and Storytelling Throughout the anniversary year, the Society will highlight three core themes:

Irish record survival: correcting the misconception that 'all the records were destroyed', by amplifying the message: 'There are Irish records—you just need to know where to look'.

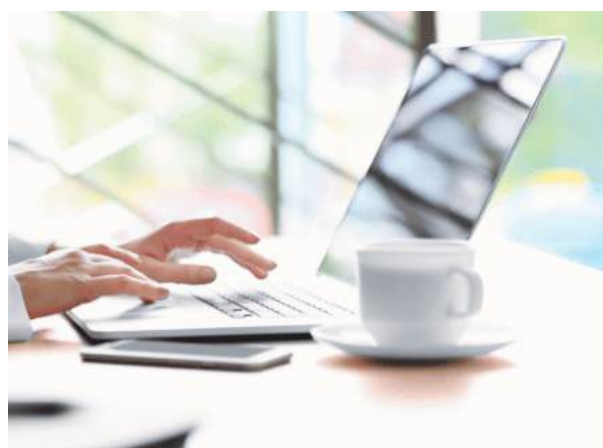
Preservation and digitisation: raising awareness of the IGRS Library, archival collections and the Society's ongoing digitisation needs.

Global Irish identity: celebrating the international community of researchers, libraries and volunteers that has sustained the Society for nearly a century. www.irishancestors.ie/90th-anniversary

[This news bulletin extracted from IGRS website www.irishancestors.ie]

Geraldene O'Reilly, Convenor
E: IrishSIG@genealogy.org.nz

Website: genealogy.org.nz/Branch-details/11084-s1100100/



Inspired by what you've read? Have a story to share?
Send it to:
editor@genealogy.org.nz

Branch and Interest Group Services

NZSG has over 50 Branches and Interest Groups throughout the country.

You can find your nearest group on the [Branches, Interest Groups & Area Contacts page](#) on our website.

HĀWERA

The SOUTH TARANAKI BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX consists of school admission records; newspaper birth, death and marriages; Anderson's memorialist records; funeral sheets. Request by surname. Send SAE and donation to: Jill Williams, Fairfield Road, Hāwera 4610 or email peter.williams@xtra.co.nz or julesmar@xtra.co.nz.

HAWKE'S BAY

HAWKE'S BAY BIOGRAPHICAL RECORDS. This is a surname index. Please provide Christian and surname/s, date range and what type of record you are seeking. Contact can be made through the Hawke's Bay Branch webpage www.genealogyhawkesbay.org.nz or by emailing HawkesBay@genealogy.org.nz. Alternatively, mail can be posted to c/- 200 Pakowhai Road, Frimley, Hastings, 4120. Donations are appreciated.

IRISH INTEREST GROUP – LOWER NORTH ISLAND

We hold education and research days locally, and across the Lower North Island region on request by branches and groups, and can also provide presentations and a helpdesk at genealogy events. Enquiries to Irish.LowerNIsig@genealogy.org.

NELSON

A database of half a million entries covering the wider Nelson area, from indexes and books in our library, Ancestors Attic. Includes pre-1856 marriage index, including Māori, passenger shipping lists 1840–1914 to and from Nelson and from the UK and Australia. E: nelson@genealogy.org.nz or PO Box 1879, Nelson 7040.

NORTH SHORE

Lookups for births and deaths c 1940 to date from *The New Zealand Herald*. Images for headstones and/or plaques in the North Shore Memorial Park (AKA Schnapper Rock Cemetery) - the database is available on [our website](#) -please provide the reference along with the surname and given name. Email request to northshore@genealogy.org.nz A small donation to the branch will be much appreciated.

OAMARU

Oamaru Cemeteries CD Headstone Transcriptions. For both the Old and New Cemeteries. The Old Cemetery records have been updated. Cost \$25 including p&p. Enquiries to Oamaru@genealogy.org.nz.

PALMERSTON NORTH

Our SETTLERS DATABASE 1870–1900 contains 3,000 names or family groups. Cemetery headstone transcriptions; BDM newspaper clippings; school admissions transcriptions—20,000 and growing; funeral cards. Enquiries to: palmerstonnorth@genealogy.org.nz. Include what you already know. A small donation is requested.

PAPAKURA

The PAPAKURA AND DISTRICTS BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX includes Alfriston, Ardmore, Ararimu, Clevedon, Drury, Karaka, Kawakawa Bay, Maketu, Ramarama, Slippery Creek, Springfield and Wairoa South. Enquiries welcome, mail service only with SAE and donation to NZSG Papakura Branch, PO Box 72–993, Papakura 2244. E: papakura@genealogy.org.nz.

TE AWAMUTU

Booklets of MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS FOR ST JOHN'S and ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCHES including full transcriptions from cemetery and church interiors, plans, histories and index. Also digital images of inscriptions from both cemeteries, lookups for local school admission registers (varying dates) and local newspaper family notices (1911–1974). Enquiries to teawamutu@genealogy.org.nz.

WELLINGTON ARCHIVES RECORDS REQUESTS

While Archives New Zealand have suspended their digitisation programme, NZSG Kilbirnie Branch is available to do lookups for the Wellington Reading Rooms. Please provide the R reference from Archives NZ's Collections Search. A small koha is appreciated. Enquiries to Kilbirnie@genealogy.org.nz.

Contributions from branches and interest groups are always welcome in the journal—especially if you can pass on useful information from your area that may assist other members. Events, projects, new repositories and services, ways you have engaged in the community and given something back. Contact the Editor,

NZSG Kiwi Collection



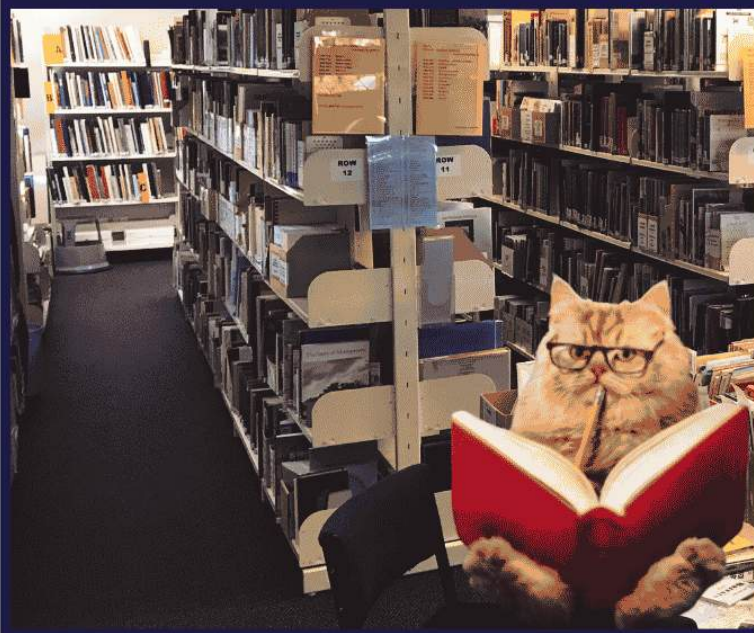
Now with over 17 million records?

Who will you find on the

NZSG Kiwi Collection

(additional subscription to access all records - get a free taster on our website)

Explore the treasures of our physical collection with our
Library Cat(a)logue



Find more information on these services and more at

www.genealogy.org.nz

or join us at the

Auckland Family History Expo



Help with
the Shipping Collection!

NZSG Certificates Collection
Over 136,000 certificates available to members! For free!

